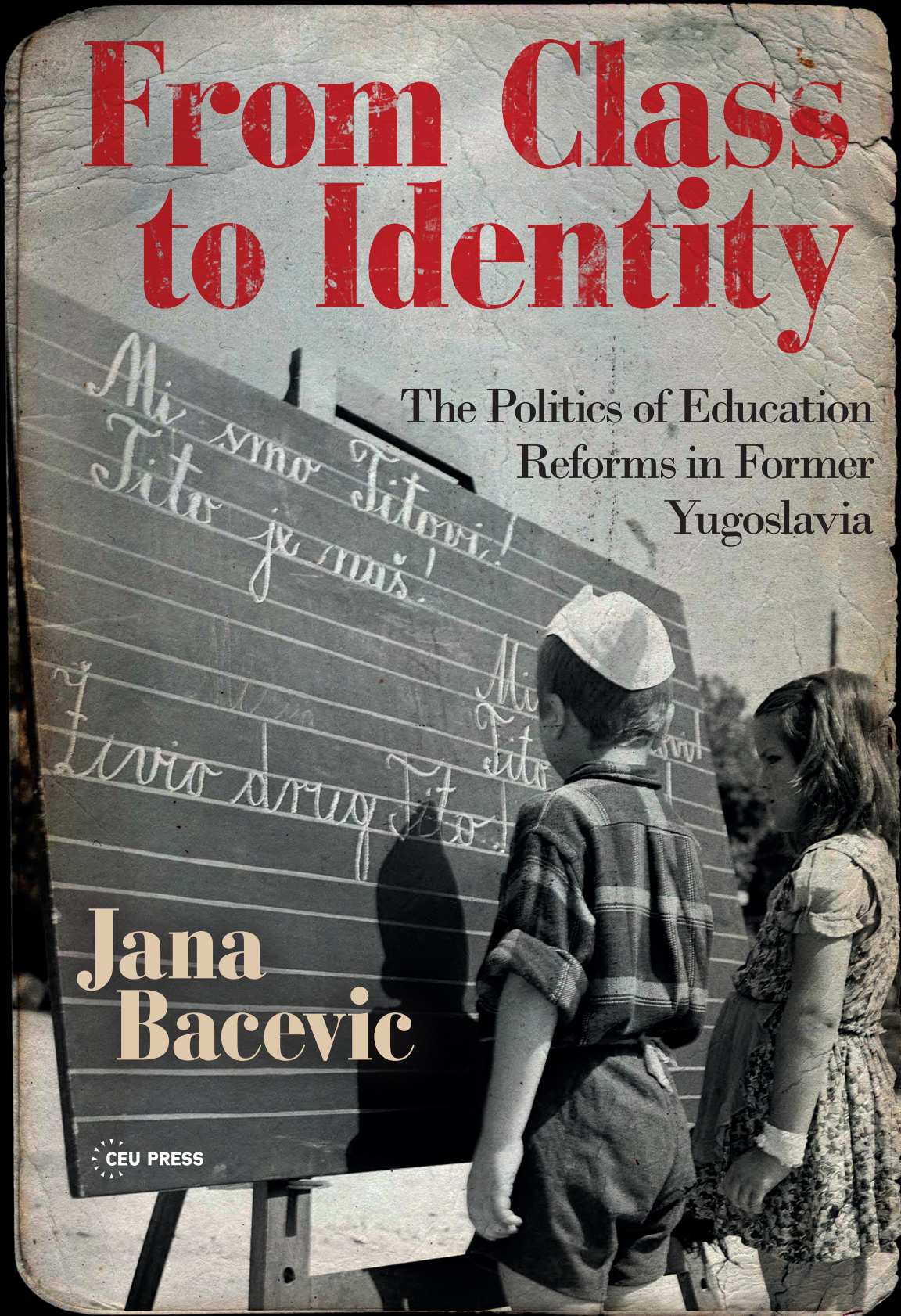


From Class to Identity

The Politics of Education
Reforms in Former
Yugoslavia

Jana
Bacevic

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FROM CLASS TO IDENTITY

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*The Politics of Education Reform
in Former Yugoslavia*

JANA BACEVIC



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E-mail: martin.greenwald@opensocietyfoundations.org

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Table of Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	IX
PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	XI
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Education, Conflict, and Former Yugoslavia	3
1.2. Situating Education Policy	8
1.3. Education in Former Yugoslavia: Between “Communist Legacy” and “Europeanization”?	12
1.4. Beyond Transition: (Re)Politicizing Policy	17
1.5. Scope, Methods, and Structure of the Book	20
CHAPTER 2: VOCATIONALIZING EDUCATION: CONFLICT, COHESION, AND DISSENT IN SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA	27
Introduction	27
2.1. The Reform	31
2.1.1. Education and the Marxist personality	32
2.1.2. Education and economy	33
2.1.3. Education and the labor market	34
2.1.4. Education and class	36

2.1.5. Education and decentralization	37
2.1.6. Education and production	38
2.1.7. Education and the value of labor	39
2.2. Power and Failure	41
2.3. 1968–1971: Dissent and Non-Cohesion in Socialist Yugoslavia	45
2.3.1. Belgrade 1968	46
2.3.2. University of Prishtina	56
2.3.4. Croatian Spring	59
2.4. From Spring to Fall	64
2.5. Vocation-Oriented Education Reform: Solution or Palliative Education?	71
2.6. Conclusions	74
 CHAPTER 3: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OR CIVIC EDUCATION? EDUCATION POLICY AND TRANSITION IN POST-MILOŠEVIĆ SERBIA	
Introduction	79
3.1. The State of Transition	86
3.2. Blitz Policy	91
3.3. Religious and Civic Education: A Policy Paradox?	95
3.4. Building Consensus: Changing Narratives on Religious Education	100
3.5. The Name(s) of Numbers	104
3.6. Two Subjects, Two Serbias?	106
3.7. The State and the Church	110
3.8. Policy in Context	114
3.9. Conclusions	119
 CHAPTER 4: HIGHER EDUCATION AND POST-CONFLICT DEVELOPMENT IN SANDŽAK, KOSOVO, AND MACEDONIA ...	
Introduction	125
4.1. Post-Conflict Higher Education: A Policy Paradox?	133
4.2. Kosovo: Education at War	136

4.2.1. The early years: from 1968 to 1990	137
4.2.2. Parallel worlds, parallel systems	141
4.2.3. The Milošević–Rugova agreement	142
4.2.4. After 1999	145
4.2.5. From 2004 to independence	150
4.2.6. After independence	152
4.2.7. Universities: hostages to the nation-state(s)?	154
4.3. Sandžak: Dueling Universities	155
4.3.1. A brief history	156
4.3.2. After regime change	158
4.3.3. The International University of Novi Pazar	160
4.3.4. The State University of Novi Pazar	163
4.3.5. The puzzle of dueling universities	164
4.3.6. Conclusions: Divide et impera	166
4.4. Macedonia: Between Peacebuilding and Ethnic Polarization?	168
4.4.1. Ethnic politics	169
4.4.2. The issue of higher education in the Albanian language	170
4.4.3. University of Tetovo	171
4.4.4. From legal to political solutions	172
4.4.5. Planning the South East European University	175
4.4.6. The conflict and the Ohrid Framework Agreement	177
4.4.7. South East European University	179
4.4.8. University of Tetovo reloaded	180
4.4.9. After 2004: two universities, one town	182
4.4.10. Shifting concepts of minority education	183
4.4.11. Conclusions: Separate and (un)equal?	187
4.5. Conclusions: From Education to Fragmentation... And Back?	188
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: EDUCATION AFTER YUGOSLAVIA	195
5.1. Shifting Framework: From Government to Governance	198

5.2. Shifting Focus: From Class to Identity	204
5.3. Continuity and Change	208
5.4. Beyond Yugoslavia: What Is To Be Done?	211
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 215

List of abbreviations

CAQA	Commission for accreditation and quality assurance in Serbia
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
DS	Democratic Party in Serbia
DSS	Democratic Party of Serbia
IC	Islamic Community in Serbia
ICG	International Crisis Group
IUNP	International University in Novi Pazar
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LC	League of Communists
LCC	League of Communists of Croatia
LCS	League of Communists of Serbia
LCY	League of Communists of Yugoslavia
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports in Serbia
NMC	National Minority Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OFA	Ohrid Framework Agreement
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSCE	OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
HCNM	
SDA	Party of Democratic Action in Sandzak
SEEU	South East European University
SFRY	Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia
SUNP	State University in Novi Pazar
SUT	State University of Tetovo
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UP	University of Prishtina
UPKM	University of Prishtina temporarily located in Kosovska Mitrovica
US	United States of America
UT	University of Tetovo
WWII	World War II

Preface and acknowledgments

This book tells the story of education policies in former Yugoslavia and some of the states that grew out of its dissolution. It begins with education reforms that took place in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia in the 1960s and ends with the post-conflict development initiatives in its successor states today. The story follows the evolution of policymaking from the early focus on class, towards the contemporary perspective of identitarian politics, focusing on three main periods or case studies: vocation-oriented education reform in socialist Yugoslavia, the introduction of religious and civic education in Serbia after Milošević, and the development of “ethnic” higher education in the divided societies of post-Yugoslavia.

Rather than representing just random pieces of the Yugoslav puzzle, the book claims that education reforms before and after the breakup of Yugoslavia both reflected and shaped the broader social and political processes at hand. This happened on two levels: that of policymaking, where the plurality of political actors in the framework of post-liberal governance came to replace the centrist, top-down initiatives usually associated with communism, and on the level of political subjectivities, where the categories related to class gradually became obscured and replaced with those based on identity.

Although these developments may appear logical in the context of Yugoslav dissolution and the wars that ensued, this book claims that none were obvious or inevitable; on the contrary, they were structured

and reinforced through specific policy decisions. The question the book hopes to answer is *why* policymakers opted for these solutions, and what were the longer-term effects of these choices. In this sense, the book moves away from the fixation on “nationalism” as the only relevant variable in understanding the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav dynamics, and focuses on how specific political choices interact(ed) with social and historical conditions to create lasting institutional and political arrangements.

Ultimately, this book is about why education policies are important, and why, to use the often-cited parable, they should not be left to policymakers only. It argues that the combined processes of depoliticization and fragmentation, which mark the field of education policymaking today, tend to obscure the main question, which is the role of education and its effects in the society. In this sense, it hopes to provide useful insights not only for scholars and students interested in education policies or the former Yugoslavia, but also to all those who think, act, write, argue, and care about what the purposes of education are or should be.

This manuscript grew out of multiple, frequently overlapping and sometimes even conflicting research and policy projects. They include the project on Gender equality and citizenship (no. 47021) at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade; teaching at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade and at the Faculty for Media and Communications at Singidunum University; as well as working for, and with, the Centre for Education Policy, Center for Comparative Conflict Studies, SPARK, Government of Serbia, and Petnica Science Centre. Although rather strenuous, this was also a wonderful and very educational period. During this time, I met a lot of individuals who—directly or indirectly—helped the research and thinking process that resulted in this manuscript. They include Artan Çollaku, Bogdan Denitch, Yannick du Pont, Sebastian Dworack, Orli Fridman, Krenar Gashi, Sonja Licht, Ivan Kovačević, Vigor Majić, Radmila Maslovarić, Klemen Miklavič, Miloš Milenković, Danijela Nenadić, Srbijanka Turajlić, Martina Vukasović, Pavel Zgaga, Bojan Žikić, as well as the staff of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in The Hague.

This book would probably not have been possible had I not come to the Central European University in Budapest. During this period,

I benefited from the visiting research fellowship of the Special and Extension Programs of CEU, as well as from the Visegrad Fellowship at the Open Society Archives (OSA), both of which were immensely useful. The first and biggest thank you goes to professor Marvin Lazerson, who convinced me to write the book in the first place, and provided invaluable suggestions, constructive criticism, and above all, consistent support, throughout the process as well as introduced me to Nóra Vörös at CEU Press, who has been a wonderful editor. Thanks also go to Liviu Matei, who supported me in staying at CEU, to professors Nenad Dimitrijevic and Carsten Q. Schneider, whose courses provided additional thinking material, and to professor István Rév, who supervised my research at OSA. In addition, I learned a lot from the students in my courses, as well as from the discussions and debates within and outside of the institutional framework of CEU. I feel the need to mention friends and colleagues who helped with everything from articles to moving—Artak Galyan, Maria Falina, Luka Lisjak, Zsófia Lóránd, Renata Kralikova, Alan Pejković, José Reis Santos, Eldar Sarajlić, Katalin Stráner, Norbert Šabić, Piotr Wciślik and others, as well as to the staff of Espresso Embassy at Arany János utca, who kept me caffeinated in the last stages of editing the manuscript. Equal thanks go to friends from Belgrade: Vera Dragutinović, Tamara Dimitrijević, Nađa Duhaček, Ivan Đorđević, Irena Racković, Marina Simić, Igor Smolić, Adriana Zaharijević, and many others. Special thank you to Tijana Bakić Hayden who helped with one of the early parts of this manuscript. Last, but not least, Koen Geven has been an indescribable source of strength and support.

In a different way, this book owes its existence to four very special people: my late grandfather, a teacher and a communist, who escaped sheep-keeping in the mountains of Montenegro in order to attend school; my late grandmother, a historian and atheist, who refused to believe the stuff she was taught at school; my late father, a sociologist, who ran away from home to join the resistance at the end of World War II, and until the very end kept claiming that Yugoslavia would never fall apart; and, finally, my mother, who taught me why education matters. It is to them that I dedicate these pages.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This book tells the story of the development of education policies in former Yugoslavia, as well as in some of its former constituent parts¹ today. More than ten years have elapsed from the end of the violent conflict that forever changed the way the region is thought of, both in scholarly circles and among those who have the dubious fortune of sharing the citizenship of one (or more) of its successor states, but the region remains marked by the conflict and its different legacies. In this context, education is frequently conceptualized as the magic ingredient that can help the people in the region surmount these legacies, both in terms of enabling economic growth and combatting poverty and in terms of transmitting knowledge and skills that can mitigate social cleavages and tensions, and thus—or at least that’s how the international development credo goes—addressing both the causes and the consequences of the conflict.

This book aims to challenge this assumption, which, as a version of what Grubb and Lazerson (2004) have termed the “education gospel,” tends to be accepted almost without questioning both in policy and

¹ There is considerable debate on what is the proper term to use for the political entities in the post-Yugoslav space. Where possible, this book refers to specific entities; otherwise, it utilizes the syntagms “former Yugoslav states,” “post-Yugoslavia” or “the successor states of former Yugoslavia” alternately, without assumptions of their status, etc.

academic circles. It aims to show how some of the most ambitious education projects and reforms, from Tito's Yugoslavia to the present-day successor states, actually reproduced and possibly exacerbated social divisions. In itself, this is not such a shocking argument: approaches in sociology and philosophy of education known as "conflict theories" (Sadovnik 2004; Collins 1971) have, at least since the 1960s, focused on the role of education in reproducing social and class inequalities (e.g., Rancière 2010, 1991; Bourdieu 1984a, b; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Willis 1977; Boudon 1974; Bernstein 1996). However, this book goes beyond these theories and looks at how education policies not only reproduce social inequalities, but, first and foremost, shape, define and channel political subjectivities and group identities, thus enabling—or not—the formulation of specific demands and struggles. This means that education is intrinsically neither "good" nor "bad": it has the potential to both mitigate and transform conflicts, as well as to (re)produce them. It is exactly this dual face of education or, in more philosophical terms, its potential to foster both emancipation and reproduction, that make it at the same time exciting for research and relevant for the understanding of the social processes.

The key question this book aims to answer is how education policies in former Yugoslavia and some of its successor states relate to the broader social and political dynamics of the time, and, more specifically, how they were simultaneously shaped by historical circumstances and themselves participated in establishing specific path dependencies, which, in the final instance, resulted in the breakup of former Yugoslavia and the ensuing ethnic and social fragmentation of the region. By reconstructing the political processes that surrounded the creation and implementation of these particular policies, the book hopes to shed light on the myriad links between education and conflict, and to show how these social phenomena can interact to produce lasting, and not always desirable, social consequences. In this sense, it aims to not only contribute to the understanding of the role of education in social and political processes that led to the breakup of former Yugoslavia and the continuing ethnic and social fragmentation of the region, but also to develop the explanatory frameworks that facilitate understanding of the interaction between education and politics, and thus, in the final instance, open up venues for the discussion of the ways in which education can contribute to

emancipation without necessarily reproducing the existing social divisions or creating new ones.

1.1. Education, Conflict, and Former Yugoslavia

For better or worse, the former Yugoslavia and its successor states lend themselves as particularly good examples to investigate relationships between education and conflict (cf. Lange and Dawson 2010, 217). Hailed by the West in the second half of the twentieth century as the rare successful experiment in combining state socialism with market principles, by the last decade of the same century most of the constituent parts of the Yugoslav federation were immersed in a conflict that shocked not only Western observers, but the rest of the world as well. For the people in the region, the conflict brought about innumerable loss of life, dignity, pride and security, and mass atrocities the likes of which had not been seen in Europe since the Holocaust. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency it resulted in Europe's biggest refugee crisis since WWII,² as well as large-scale destruction of infrastructure and economy.

Historically, the development of what could be consolidated public services, including education,³ in Yugoslavia has been related to imperial (Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman) rule, or to the period of the development of nation-state(s). Until then, the regional elites were, for the most part, being educated abroad. With the "Yugoslav Piedmont," the winning of the independence from the Ottoman Empire, the first independent Ministry of Education was set up. Early attempts at the centralization and integration of the education system can be traced to the rule of King Alexander and the founding of the first Kingdom of

² "UN refugee agency welcomes declaration on ending the Balkan crisis" <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40328&Cr=refugees&Cr1=> (accessed on 03/16/2013).

³ The concept of "policy," in its contemporary form as used in the Western academia and public administration, is relatively recent in the region. This is partially reflected in the fact that none of the languages spoken in the region have a word for "policy," but rather commonly use the plural form of the word for "politics."

Yugoslavia (1918–1941). The main challenge at the time was to spread literacy, which, in certain parts of the country, like Bosnia and Hercegovina, and Macedonia, was at a relatively low level: the 1931 census recorded the illiteracy rate of 46% (Brown 1946, 62), while functional literacy was probably even lower than transpired through these figures.

The communist regime under Josip Broz Tito, which took over the country after the war for national liberation and the end of the World War II, essentially had a double task: it had to continue the spreading of literacy while, at the same time, providing education and training for the new engineering, intellectual, and political elites. It developed comprehensive education legislation, introduced obligatory schooling for everyone up to the age of 14, and continued the work on eradicating illiteracy. The first decades after World War II saw a rapid expansion and massification of education. This is also the period in which regional universities were developed, and more were founded. The distinctive mark was the ideological framework: the communists banned church and private schools, while Marxism formed the greater part of the teaching of social sciences and humanities.

The most comprehensive education reform in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia was implemented in the early 1970s, together with the constitutional reforms that substantially changed the power balance in and the functioning of the federation. It became known as “vocation-oriented” education, for its aim to provide clearer links between the worlds of education and work. The reform was, at least in part, provoked by what was by then already perceived as a looming crisis—the growth of unemployment, persistent social inequalities, economic decline, and political tensions that eventually furnished the framework for the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Despite the fact that the policy was largely ineffective and administratively burdensome, it remained in place in most republics until right before, and in some even after, the breakup of Yugoslavia (cf. Wachtel and Markovic 2008; Czapliński 2008). Data from 1981 indicate that only 2.7% of the active nonagricultural population had less than three years of primary school; the portion that had not completed the eighth grade had fallen to 18.9% and 58.1% had at least a high school diploma (Curtis 1990).

The period of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the ensuing armed conflicts (1991–92, 1992–95, 1998–99, 2000–01) were devastating

to education, not only because of damage incurred to infrastructure due to war and economic collapse, but also because of the displacement of large groups of people, including pupils and teachers, and the overall shock that the conflict and its aftermath caused to the societies in the region. It also resulted in the rapid nationalization of the curricula across the region of former Yugoslavia, reflecting the processes of nationalist mobilization, identity- and state-building during and after the breakup. History (but also geography) textbooks were rewritten and purged of positive references to Tito's Yugoslavia and, frequently, to the anti-fascist struggle during WWII. The projects that sought to rehabilitate different nationalist movements in former Yugoslavia were underway for most of the 1980s and 1990s; by the end of the millennium, most of them had found expression in the textbooks of the day.

The image of education in the successor states of former Yugoslavia that emerged from the conflict was rather diverse. Slovenia, as the first country to secede from Yugoslavia with a minimum of casualties, was quickly working on the modernization of its education system under the banner of European integration. Croatia followed suit, however, retaining a certain dose of nationalism in education curricula ingrained during the Tuđman era. By 2013, however, both in Slovenia and in Croatia, issues related to commercialization and massification of education have already given rise to a number of student protests that have begun to question the ubiquity of neoliberal reforms. Bosnia and Herzegovina is effectively an international protectorate, whose education system borders on impossible to analyze, given the complexity of administrative layers of the federation, Republika Srpska, cantons, and districts. What could be the domain of education policy is riddled by political struggles between the three dominant ethnic groups—Bosniak Muslims, Croats, and Serbs. Montenegro's system of education is relatively small and, apart from the nationalizing tendencies characteristic of the process of state consolidation that occurred after its split with Serbia in 2006, seems to be focusing on modernizing its relatively underdeveloped and traditionally underfunded infrastructure. Macedonia's education system closely reflects the power-sharing arrangements between its two largest ethnic groups, Macedonian Slavs and Albanians. Finally, what some call the "frozen conflict" between Serbia and Kosovo still affects their public policies, both in the sense of sovereignty and in terms of human and minority rights. This is also reflected

in education, which, similarly to that in Bosnia, is substantially shaped by issues related to the rights and agendas of particular ethnic groups.

The fact that a country with high levels of education managed to disintegrate in a violent conflict strongly challenges the assumption about the preventive nature of education in terms of managing social cleavages. This, in part, fuelled the understanding of the Yugoslav conflict through references to “ancient ethnic hatreds” (e.g., Kaplan 1993). In these accounts, Yugoslavia was a “savage” country prevented from descending into conflict only by the thin layer of “civilization” which started to crumble as soon as the economy began to stagnate. However, as, among others, Malešević notes, such accounts tend to completely ignore the social and political dynamics that contribute (or not) to the exacerbation of conflicts: “Popular images of the collapse of Yugoslavia were fuelled by dominant journalistic accounts and many academic works, together making the assumption that Yugoslavia disintegrated because it was a multiethnic state with a long history of mutual animosities that were kept under control by the iron fist of the communist government (...) The view that cultural difference and conflict are necessarily linked is profoundly unsociological. Although as human beings we are political animals prone to discords, competition and conflict, there is nothing inevitable in ethnicity and nationness that necessitates inter-group clashes” (Malešević 2006, 159).

This implies that understanding the evolution of the conflict, as well as its legacy, requires the reconstruction of the sociological mechanisms which contributed to the creation of conditions conducive to inter-group clashes. In other words, conflict (or at least its more violent manifestations) are not understood as “intrinsic,” but as—at least in part—*socially constructed* (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1967; Searle 1995); in Wilmer’s words, “the central question seems to be (...) is agency a result of cognition and does agency, in turn, shape social reality?” (2002, 19).

Education is of paramount importance here. Among the human discourses and practices that structure social reality, education may well be the most important, as it represents the socially recognized practice of the transmission of ideas that structure the way we think about social reality. Of course, learning, in the broadest sense, takes place in a variety of contexts: at home, in the street, at work, in the interactions with family and peers, through media and other types of public discourses. However, formal education is the one domain of human

existence charged primarily and particularly with the socialization of the individual. This is why, in most countries, education—at least on the primary level—is the task and obligation of the state: the inculcation of at least the minimum of shared values and ideas on the notion of social reality is considered a necessary prerequisite for the functioning of any individual within a given society, and hence the functioning and reproduction of the society itself. In the world where formal education, including tertiary (university) education, includes ever growing numbers of people, the education system becomes one of the most important long-lasting modes of socialization.

Scholarship on the former Yugoslavia to this date, however, has dedicated relatively little attention to the links between education, especially post-compulsory education, and social and ethnic conflicts. Among the exceptions, one prominent strand has tended to connect the ethnic conflict with the stereotypes or biased interpretations of national history in textbooks of the constituent republics of former Yugoslavia shortly before the breakup (e.g., Stojanović 2011, 2010). Although discourses in textbooks and other forms of public communication are important, this interpretation endorses a very limited view on human action, which assumes people fight other people because they read it in the textbooks at school. Similarly, it fails to acknowledge that—until the very eve of the conflict—curricula in former Yugoslavia were not more nationalist, violent, or exclusionary than those in other education systems. If nothing else, textbooks emphasized the ideology of “brotherhood and unity” and aimed, at least on paper, to achieve relatively equal representation of the history, language, and literature of all constituent groups within the country (cf. Wachtel and Markovic 2008). The majority of the generation that went to war was not raised on nationalist myths, but rather on the combination of the legacy of the anti-fascist struggle during World War II, political non-alignment, and friendly relations with other nations, which constituted the Yugoslav version of socialism. This means that linear, one-dimensional or causal explanations of the type *educational discourses* → *exclusionary identities* → *war* are hardly helpful in the understanding of the dynamics between education and conflict.

On the other hand, it is possible to see education as a rather passive domain of human activity, influenced by the broader political processes, but not directly involved in shaping them (as a matter of

fact, many educational administrators prefer this view, at least in public). This, however, is a rather naïve position that not only rejects responsibility for the social impacts of education, but also precludes the need to understand the effects it can have on societies during and after conflict, thus limiting research on education to technocratic concerns over results of standardized testing, rankings, or quotas. In most of the successor states of former Yugoslavia, however, the legacy of the conflict still resonates loudly in education. From the “two schools under one roof” in Bosnia and Herzegovina (e.g., Clark 2010), to divided societies with separate universities for different ethnic groups—Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the University of Mostar (Croatian) and University “Džemal Bijedić” (Bosniak Muslim); Kosovo, with the University of Prishtina (Albanian) and the University of Prishtina now located in Kosovska Mitrovica/Mitrovicë (Serbian); and Tetovo in Macedonia, with two different models of universities developed for the Albanian ethnic minority (South East European University and the State University in Tetovo)—political, social and ethnic divisions continue to play an important role in the dynamics that influence education in the region. Not asking how education institutions and systems actively engage in dealing with these factors thus amounts to turning a “blind eye” to the question of the role of education in society, from both research and political perspective.

1.2. Situating Education Policy

In the recent years, there has been an expansion of studies that seek to critically examine the links between education and violent conflict (e.g., Davies 2010, 2004; Robertson et al. 2007; Salmi 2006; Smith and Vaux 2003; Bush and Saltarelli 2000). Drawing on theoretical studies of discourse and power relations, one influential strand has focused on the ways in which textbooks and other forms of educational discourse can create and reproduce stereotypes and prejudice about women, racial, ethnic and religious minorities, and other social groups (cf. Davies 2010). Other studies have argued that differences in access and attainment of education can serve to maintain social and economic inequalities, creating or deepening cleavages between different groups and thus potentially presenting a source of ethnic conflict (e.g., Kos-

tovicova 2005). Large-sample statistical surveys have indicated a positive correlation between education and the likelihood of ethnic violence (e.g., Lange and Dawson 2010), which challenges the accepted wisdom about education being the “cure” for conflict.

However, despite the relevance of these studies, they still leave a gap in the understanding of the relationship between education and conflict: the question of *how* and *why* education interacts with social structure in ways that can create (or exacerbate) conditions conducive to violent conflict. Broad empirical surveys have, at best, generated rather general correlations—for instance, highly educated people are less likely to go to war, or highly educated people are more likely to support abortion (cf. Sanborn and Thyne 2012; De Groot and Goksel 2011; Lange and Dawson 2010; Hillygus 2005; Almond and Verba 1963). But they reveal very little about the underlying factors. Consider, for instance, practices of military recruitment: going into the army (in countries without mandatory conscription) is frequently the choice of people who come from poor, discriminated or otherwise marginalized backgrounds. Knowing the ubiquitous (and at least partially causal) connection between education, income, and social status, it is both reasonable and empirically sustainable to assume that these people also happen to have lower educational levels. But do they go to war *because* they are not educated? Or do they go to war because they are poor and marginalized, so enlisting may give them an opportunity to earn (legally or illegally) wealth, security, and status they could otherwise not hope to attain? Similarly, although data on access to education are a good indicator of social inequalities, they do not explain why certain groups have higher education attainment than others: is this a consequence of a state policy, chance, or some other factor or combination of factors? On the other hand, smaller-scale and ethnographic research, although it can provide useful insights into what happens “behind closed doors” of classrooms and institutions, as well as outside of the formal education systems, sometimes remains blind to the political processes that, presumably, play a role in determining what education will look like. For instance, though analyses of textbook and classroom discourses provide valuable insights into the practices of construction and reproduction of exclusionary narratives, they cannot claim with certainty whether these narratives occur as a result of specific public policies, or whether they represent the reflection of individually-held opinions and prejudices of textbook

authors, teachers, or even students and pupils, as well as whether there are links between specific education policies on the one hand, and opinions and prejudice on the other. Similarly, they can tell us very little about the effects and consequences of certain forms of education. For instance, “two schools under one roof” and the practice of building universities for different ethnic groups in one place are frequently presented as a way to enable minorities to access education. However, by providing separate venues for the education of members of different ethnic and social groups, they could be effectively contributing to segregation. So, what is really going on? What are the potential, desired, unavoidable, or unwanted consequences of specific types of education?

Put differently, the argument of this book is that, despite the attraction of both “macro” level of broad statistical comparisons and the “micro” level of ethnography, we need to focus on what Robert Merton would have called the “meso” level—that of policies. By their very nature, policies are expected to produce outcomes. However, these outcomes are not always intentional. At the same time, policies tend to reflect the ideas of different groups of political actors, not only in terms of the content of policies themselves, but also in terms of other groups, the distribution of rights and privileges, and other aspects that are the subject of politics (Fischer 2003). Similarly to Bourdieu’s habitus (e.g., Bourdieu 1990), then, policies are both a product of structuring, and at the same time, instruments for the structuring, of social reality. Thus, policies include aspects of both the “micro” and the “macro” levels: they reflect, represent, and reproduce the dominant discourses and ideas, but also produce longer- or shorter-term effects. In a sense, they are the instructions on how to weave threads that structure reality, and the means through which specific assumptions become embedded in institutions—as well as “embodied” in humans—and thus shape the trajectories along which societies develop. Understanding how education policies are constructed, discussed, and framed, then, can provide important insights into the very “fabric” of society—the relationships that hold it together (or pull it apart), and the social and political dynamics that influence these relationships.

Two broad approaches can be distinguished in the field of policy studies: they are commonly referred to as positivist and post-positivist (Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl 2009, 21; Fischer 2003). The positivist approach sees the analysis of policy as an activity aimed at the dis-

covery of objective scientific knowledge, which has a strong prescriptive dimension: it should be able to generate clear directions and guidelines for the design of future policies. It predominantly relies on methods imported from economics, and utilizes a rationalist model of decision-making according to which individuals behave as if in a market. The objective of such an analysis is to establish clear correlates and goals, and thus (presumably) enable the prediction of different policy outcomes. Positivism assumes that there is the (objectively and scientifically identifiable) best way of achieving a specific policy goal; thus, it aims to establish causal linkages that would enable the optimization of the process of reaching the desired outcome. Post-positivism in policy studies developed as a reaction to these approaches, criticizing them as overtly technocratic, top-down, and goal-oriented (cf. Fischer 2003). Although there is no post-positivist “group” as such (cf. Hodgson and Irving 2007, 3), post-positivists “... generally argue that mainstream policy analysts informed by welfare economics are misguided in their obsession with quantitative analysis, objective separation of facts and values, and generalizable findings independent of particular social contexts (...) the instrumental, ends-means analyses on which welfare economics-inspired policy analysts spend so much effort, they argue, are mistaken because policies rarely have unambiguous goals and rarely do policymakers choose the most efficient means of achieving them. Instead, policy goals and means are products of constant conflict and negotiation among policymakers guided by their values and interests and shaped by a variety of contingent circumstances” (Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl 2009, 26–27).

This book predominantly relies on the latter perspective to analyze education policies in former Yugoslavia and its successor states. Education is not seen as a rational means to achieve a rational end; in this sense, the book does not attempt to establish a direct causal *link* between education policies on the one hand, and the dissolution of Yugoslavia on the other. On the contrary, the book will aim to show that many of these policies can be seen as irrational or *paradoxical*. According to Stone (2002), policy paradoxes are situations in which policymakers pursue policies or moves that seem contradictory to their stated goals: sometimes, it appears as if there is no specific rational justification for introducing a certain kind of policy, or for adhering to it. However, what at first can seem paradoxical can actually turn out

to make a lot of sense when policies are analyzed on a deeper level, which strives to assess their *implicit* meanings and purposes and the ways that they reflect the agendas and ideas of different actors. In this sense, the book sees education policies made before, during, and after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia as the product and reflection of complex and multiple social processes. Furthermore, the book argues that a common thread can be established between the underlying tensions and conflicts that shaped education policies at the time of Yugoslavia's dissolution, and those that continue to influence and shape the domain of public policymaking in those parts of the former Yugoslavia where conflicts happened most recently, in particular Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, and Kosovo.

This book, however, does not intend to argue that education policies in the former Yugoslavia should be seen or understood as a cause of conflict that ultimately led to its breakup. In other words, the objective is to “look not at whether structural or cognitive variables cause conflict and violence, but how they interact and converge” (Wilmer 2002, 21). What it hopes to show is how the myriad social processes and what we usually refer to as “political dynamics”—including those related to violent conflict—and public policies, including those in the sphere of education, become mutually constitutive and co-evolve. In this sense, it hopes to shift the discussion and analysis of education policy in present-day successor states of the former Yugoslavia, which all too often focus on simple, unidirectional, or causal explanatory models—seeing education either as the “universal ill” that leads to social divisions, or, alternatively, as the “universal cure” for them—into a more complex understanding of the ways that social structures, ideas, and motives of particular actors interact and converge, ultimately resulting in education policies that continue to shape the political life of the region.

1.3. Education in Former Yugoslavia: Between “Communist Legacy” and “Europeanization”?

Before outlining the ways in which the book will approach these questions, some attention needs to be devoted to the analysis of the two factors (or “variables”) that most commonly surface in the analysis of the development of education policies in the region. One is usually

referred to as the “communist legacy,” and the other as “Europeanization” or European integration.

“Communist legacy” refers to the bundle of practices, assumptions, and normative notions incorporated in structures and actors during the period of the rule of communist (or socialist) regimes in Central, Eastern, and South-East Europe. Broadly speaking, it includes the combination of a burdensome bureaucracy, “top-heavy” structures, and slowness and inefficiency in decision-making, often providing space for different alternative procedures, including nepotism and corruption. On a more positive note, communism is also associated with redistributive notions of social justice, which privilege equality in access to social services, including education: for instance, Bozóki lists “free (but quantitatively restricted) access to higher education” among the “pros” of communist legacy (2008, 15). Overall, however, the legacy of communism is seen as predominantly negative, as something that needs to be overcome in the process of European integration of the Western Balkans.

The other process, also known as “Europeanization,” commonly refers to the set of policy reforms related to the economic, political and social transition coupled with the post-conflict transformation of the Western Balkans. The reforms include the introduction of formal elements of liberal democracy (free and fair elections, rule of law, institutions) and market economy (privatization of formerly state-owned enterprises, opening of markets, deregulating public services). Symbolically (and romantically) described as the Western Balkans’ “return” to Europe, the process is politically weighed by the proximity of European Union (EU) membership of particular countries, as well as the rise to different symbolic intermediary stages of accession (e.g., candidate status). In the domain of education, the process is usually connected to the participation in transnational networks (such as the Bologna process and its structures), but also to the growing privatization and neoliberalization of education (cf. Bačević 2010).

Rather than opposing tendencies, these two constructs should be seen as complementary, or rather as two sides of the same coin. To begin with, the very notion of communist “legacy” was introduced as communism was already phasing out in Eastern Europe, and as “Europeanization” was beginning to take hold over regional politics. In both international and national contexts, the degree of “Europeanization”

of different countries is frequently assessed as a measure of the degree to which they had managed to distance themselves from their communist heritage. Secondly, and as a consequence, “communist legacy” is conjured up to explain the failure of the implementation of reforms related to the abovementioned process of “Europeanization.” Thus, communism is seen as a subterranean influence preventing the (uncritical) adoption of reform policies embedded within the programs of European integration, structural development, state-building and governance transfer. For instance, the corruption in education in the Western Balkans is treated as the refusal by the old (and, by extension, incompetent) academic elites to conform to the (Western) standards of transparency and integrity, opting instead for “informal” networks stemming from the inefficiency of communist administration (e.g., Czapliński 2008). This approach provides the space for the operationalization of the concept of “policy resistance,” understood as the unwillingness of local actors to accept (without a fight) the transfer of (presumably superior and benevolent) policies from the West to the East. Bache and Taylor write: “Resistance is a strategy of reacting to pressures from outside a social group. This may be an expression of strong organisational or national identity, which can develop into a defence of established values that are seen as threatened by external ideas” (2003, 292). In this metaphor, there exist established (i.e., historical) values in the background, which—akin to grass or weed under newly paved over concrete path in the garden—can “spring up” to resist the formation of new policies on top of them.

Although “communist legacy” and “Europeanization” as well as their interaction can offer attractive explanations for the dynamics of policy development in the Western Balkans, the ease with which both of these concepts seem to be applied to the process of education reforms can obscure other factors and policy dynamics. To an extent, this stems from the fact that the use of these concepts tends to be epistemologically circular. “Europeanization” (or European integration) is assumed as the main and primary policy driver, and, as a consequence, instances in which policies or decisions diverge from this goal are ascribed to the influence of “communist legacy.” In this context, “communist legacy” is operationalized as some sort of path dependency through which history continues to exert influence over present-day policies in the region. In Grugel’s (2002, 85) words, “behaviour

is dependent at least as much on the weight of the past as it is on the imperative for change.” Although commendable for its recognition of the construction of the past as a factor in explaining the present, it provides little guidance for the understanding of *how* this process takes place. Is it through institutions, and, if they had substantially changed since the beginning of transition, what would account for the (presumed) lasting influence of the communist legacy? Is it through actors, and, given that many of them have retired from the political scene, how to account for their continuing influence? Is it through social memory, and, given its contested nature in many of the former Yugoslav countries, how to account for what are claimed to be similarities, which, among other things, justify researching the region as a relatively homogenous (Yugo)sphere (e.g., Judah 2009)?

More problematically, the Europeanization-cum-communist-legacy construct assumes the existence of shared and mutually understood concepts of both “Europe” and “communism.” This politically naïve assumption rests on the idea that political actors (at least within the boundaries of a national polity) have a shared notion of what European integration entails, as well as an agreed definition of what communism was and what its institutional legacy may be. It fails to acknowledge that there are probably as many ideas or concepts of both European integration and communist legacy as there are actors in these countries, and that these different ideas and concepts play a rather significant role in the political dynamics of the region. In other words, the specter of Europeanization-cum-communist legacy obscures the interests, ideas, and rationales of the local political actors, and thus effectively prevents deeper exploration into the dynamics of policymaking. Even if we accept that both the communist legacy and European future exist as identifiable factors, what kind of influence are they actually exerting, and how? What is the understanding that different actors have of these concepts? How do they shape the local and regional political dynamics? Also, and more importantly, what other factors and ideas may be influencing the development of policies in the region? In other words, should the behavior of political actors be understood only as a product of the “tension” between (communist) history and (European) future (e.g., Bache and Taylor 2003, 283), or should policymaking and development be understood as a consequence of more complex and interdependent factors contributing to the political dynamics in the region?

The issue here is not only that the causal mechanisms remain somewhat unclear, but that these concepts, despite their origin, actually lead to a rather depoliticized view of the processes of change. Except when understood as the ghost of the past that haunts what otherwise presumably would have been unproblematic (and unproblematicized) transitions to market economy, the communist legacy in Eastern Europe is tolerated either in the depoliticized, aseptic form of “heritage tourism” (which, by itself, is perfectly integrated in and compatible with the market economy), or in different versions of “nostalgia,” which, as Boym (2002) argues, is a concept tied more to passive reflection than to political mobilization. Similarly, the concept of “Europeanization” assumes a surprisingly apolitical form of political transformation, based on common, agreed upon values, norms and ideals. This recalls Chandler’s (2006, 145) analysis of European Union’s policies for combating corruption: “Not only do the practices of anti-corruption appear to be technocratic and non-political, they also create the framework through which the political framework becomes ‘corruptionised’—focused not on political differences but on procedures, etiquette and administrative standards.” What passes for “Europeanization” in education and other domains of public policy similarly entails a significant restructuring of the public sphere, combining efficiency-related reforms with substantial dependence on external networks, organizations, or financial institutions (e.g., Kwiek 2004). These reforms, especially in the Western Balkans, both circumvent democratic processes and undermine even the pretense of the sovereignty of the state. However, the space for their contestation is severely constricted: any resistance to these neoliberal reforms risks to slip into (or at least be labeled as) nationalism, communism, fascism, or any combination of the above.

As a consequence, this interpretative or explanatory framework overtly simplifies the policy process, placing agency primarily in the domain of “external” (in this case, European) influence, while restricting local actors to the domain of implementation. As a consequence, the agency of local politicians, policymakers, voters, and the general public is portrayed as rather limited and dependent only on external conditioning, in this case primarily EU suggestions and guidelines. From within this perspective, the “resistance” or failure of the local actors to accept change is usually ascribed to a form of path

dependency, i.e., the existence of historical (most frequently communist) legacies, which presumably determine the dynamics of policy adoption and implementation. However, it omits the fact that local actors may have a variety of reasons for acting the way they do, and that some of these reasons may have to do with European integration, but that others may have more to do with local political dynamics, power relations, and, ultimately, the ways in which local actors choose to interpret, define, and utilize concepts such as European integration and the communist legacy.

Thus, rather than lending themselves to a useful explanatory framework for the understanding of the processes of change in the region, both the communist legacy and “Europeanization” portray the region as stuck in its own history. These categories situate the Balkans between the “West” and “East,” or rather between the fully developed (late or post-) modernity and underdevelopment associated with the past. Thus, former Yugoslavia becomes a site of “unfinished modernization” which, as such, has to undergo a number of profound changes in order to be fully accepted (and acceptable) in the European “family of nations.” This notion is not only Orientalist (cf. Todorova 1997), but also fundamentally apolitical.

1.4. Beyond Transition: (Re)politicizing Policy

Rather than reproducing the artificial dichotomy of the communist past and European future, this book intends to take a critical perspective that looks at how these (and other) constructs are created and recreated in, by, and through public policies. In other words, instead of the teleological understanding of the political dynamics of the Western Balkans as progress towards European integration and away from the communist past, this book will aim to bring *the political* back into the analysis of policymaking. In this context, the notion of “political” is closest to the meaning in which theorists such as Chantal Mouffe (2005, 1993), Ernesto Laclau (1994), and Jacques Rancière (e.g., 2010) utilize it (cf. Ruitenberg 2011, 98). This means understanding politics as a place of, and for, the challenging, contestation, transformation and deliberation of different ideologies related to what constitutes a good society, who should rule it, and how its benefits should be

distributed. Education policy, in this sense, is fundamentally political: it concerns not only the questions of reproduction, equality, or distribution, but also the questions of whom (or which groups) can and should be recognized as legitimate bearers of rights and claims, and according to which (and whose) criteria should policy be made and evaluated. Or, as Jenkins put it:

Policy is not simply concerned with rationality, knowledge and efficient ends-means relationships. It is as much about ends as means, and ends are generally specified, at least in part, by values and ideology. Policy formulation and implementation is also a prime medium in modern nation states for the packaging, communication and promotion of values and ideology (...) If we accept a working definition of ideology as bodies of knowledge that make claims about how the world is and how it ought to be, then all policy is probably, by definition, ideological. In this ideological sense, policy processes either reproduce existing meanings or create and disseminate new meanings, whether these be moral values, specifications of legitimate or illegitimate action, categories of individuals or collectivities, estimations of the relative value of resources and so on. (Jenkins 2007, 28–29)

Thus, understanding the making of education policies cannot be complete without analyzing the underlying ideas of identity, community, justice, distribution, rights, and the ways in which they are reflected and transformed in contemporary contexts. These ideas, however, do not exist in a vacuum: they interact, clash, compete, and seek to dominate the political arena (Ruitenberg 2011). The process of education policymaking, rather than a technical-rational attempt to search for the “best solutions,” is a fundamentally political process in which at stake are not only specific forms of policies, or outcomes or benefits for a particular social group, but also the very shape and configuration of the society and the power relationships it entails.

The crux of this book is thus concerned with how education policies—intentionally or not—interact with political processes and thus contribute to the imagining of political subjectivities (e.g., Peters and Besley 2007, Foucault 1998). As Jenkins (2007, 29) reminds us, “In the human worlds of modernity, policy—and not just social policy, incidentally—contributes massively to the shaping of whatever it is that we call ‘the social’ (...) Policy formulation and implementation often,

whether explicitly or implicitly, identifies and defines human beings and the relationships that ought to exist between them—as populations, as groups, as categories of individuals, in ways that are necessarily consequential, even if those consequences may be unintended.” In other words, education policies define, shape and determine the very fabric of society, and this is exactly the reason why understanding how they came about allows us to “capture” the broader and more general social processes at stake.

This approach hopes to stimulate a shift in the thinking about public policies in the Western Balkans, which, in line with Chandler’s concept of “post-liberal governance,” tends to focus on the technical-rational aspect. This entails moving away from the attempts to gauge the success of policy implementation or to explain its failure; in the latter, the behavior of local actors is frequently written off as illogical and/or irrational, without attempts to understand the causes and roots of “policy resistance” to the solutions transferred from substantially different political and social contexts. Contrary to this, this book argues that the apparent policy paradoxes in education policy in the Western Balkans should be understood as specific political strategies which local actors utilized in processes of political contestation and social transformation that characterize the periods of policymaking both before and after the dissolution of former Yugoslavia. In this context, the process of policymaking is reinterpreted as an essential part of the social and political dynamics of the region.

Rather than a self understood and “natural” part either of dealing with the communist legacy, or of European integration of the region, then, policy agendas and particular decisions are seen as fundamentally political, in the sense in which they actively engage in creating, constructing, defining, organizing, using and mobilizing, or, alternatively, suppressing, containing, manipulating and controlling particular political and group identities. This, at the same time, enables the analysis and assessment of policies not only (nor primarily) in terms of the extent to which they fulfill their stated goals and purposes, but also (and rather) in the sense in which they construct different political communities and thus influence and channel the formulation and expression of political ideas and demands.

The purpose of this shift of perspective is not to exclude or deny the value of other, more rational or institution-oriented approaches to

policy analysis. Rather, by focusing on the tensions, contestations, ruptures, and conflicts in the processes of social construction that underlie policymaking, the book aims to show how paradoxes, inconsistencies, and changes of direction that can be so exasperating to analysts can be understood in the context of the complex social and political dynamics in the Western Balkans and elsewhere. By doing this, the text aims to challenge the “politics of consensus” that tend to characterize the world of policy, and to “bring the politics back in” by showing how specific policy solutions or preferences are always arbitrary in the sense in which they reflect the assumptions, identities, and political agendas of specific actors. The political and ideological sides of policymaking, thus, are not obstacles that need to be removed in order to make better policies, but rather integral and inextricable elements that influence both the creation of policies and their outcomes. In this sense, the book hopes to contribute to the existing analyses of how education policies are made, but also to public discussions on public policies, which seem to always provide a fresh source of conflicts and controversies.

1.5. Scope, Methods, and Structure of the Book

Today, education policymaking in the Western Balkans poses quite a number of challenges for researchers and administrators alike. Often, those that come from the region are not less perplexed than those who come from the outside. After all, besides being the territory where educated people nevertheless go to war, the Western Balkans are also the site of widespread academic corruption, “mushrooming” higher education, the phenomenon of “two schools under one roof” and, last but not least, the home of universities with names such as UFO, Megatrend, Illyria Royal, or Slobomir (cf. Bieber 2011a).

From the perspective of policy analysis, two broad periods in the development of education policy can be distinguished: one is the period of the communist/socialist regime, when decisions were centralized and agendas mostly introduced by the top echelons of the Party (later League of Communists). These policies were framed in the ideological package of Marxism and self-management, although they never went entirely uncontested. This period ended with the ten years of war in the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, which saw the nationalization of curri-

cula paralleling the creation of new states and entities in the region. The second period begins with the end of the armed conflict(s), the removal of Slobodan Milošević in 2000, and the consolidation of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia. This period marks the beginning of education policymaking in its contemporary sense, which presumes the democratic procedures of design, discussion, implementation, and evaluation. With the development of political pluralism, education and other public policies have become open spaces for the contestation and discussion of different ideologies, and they increasingly reflect the struggles of different political actors for the monopoly over meanings. This does not imply, however, that there is a clear demarcation line between education policies during communism and those after. On the contrary, this book argues that a common theme can be established: this theme concerns the ways in which topics related to identity and community, from class to ethnic identifications, became integrated into education policies, and how these policies responded to—and, in some cases, aimed to influence—the deeper processes of political and societal change. In this context, education policies not only identified and responded to the claims for education rights of different groups, but also, inevitably, contributed to their creation and formulation.

The book looks at the policies developed for education in the former Yugoslavia, both before and after the breakup, and attempts to establish relationships between these policies and the surrounding and ensuing social cleavages and conflicts. It is important to note that the emphasis in the book is on public policy, understood as the policies of the state. This perspective brings certain limitations. During the worst of conflicts in the 1990s formal state policy in the domain of education hardly existed. It is thus hard to speak of a defined public authority in charge of designing and implementing policies, as well as of at least a minimum of open public debate and dissent concerning different solutions. This is why the book makes limited references to the periods of open hostilities; however, both the factors leading up to the conflict(s) and their legacies are more than reflected in the policies of the periods that surrounded them.

The book focuses on three cases. The first is the case of vocation-oriented education reform that took place in the 1970s and the 1980s, in the period leading to the breakup of former Yugoslavia. The second happened in the period of transition following the end of socialism and

regime changes in the former republics of Yugoslavia; it concerns the introduction of religious (and civic) education into schools in Serbia, a highly controversial policy that, as we shall see, brought to the surface the questions of social divisions and “dealing with the past” in former Yugoslavia rather clearly. The third concerns policies related to post-conflict development, and focuses on higher education in Serbia (Sandžak), Kosovo, and Macedonia, as examples of multiethnic and divided societies in former Yugoslavia. The book sees these cases as happening during “critical junctures” (cf. Collier and Collier 2002; Lipset and Rokkan 1967), historical periods of significant change that entail moments of uncertainty (or “critical openings”) in political (and social) systems, which, subsequently, assume distinct legacies or path dependencies of their own (cf. Kalb 2011). Perhaps not surprisingly, many of these critical junctures were marked or followed by substantial reforms in the public sector, which included overarching and sometimes rather radical education reforms. This implies that, at different points in the recent history of Yugoslavia and its successor states, education policies were perceived as an important element of social transformation. In this sense, they were not just technical solutions to objectively existing problems, but also had a pronounced ideological dimension, which reflected the views and perceptions of different political actors.

The starting questions for the analysis of these cases are rather simple: why was a certain policy adopted at a certain point in time? Why was it chosen over any other policy? These kinds of questions inform the first level of analysis, which deals with the *explicit* dimension of policies. How was the policy justified? Who was in charge of designing, promoting, and implementing it? What was the problem or problems it aimed to solve? These questions, and the apparent paradoxes that ensue from them, lead to the second level of analysis, related to the *implicit* dimension of policies. On this level, the book asks: what is constructed as problems (and solutions) in the policy, and what meanings are attached to them? What social actors are defined as stakeholders and/or targets of policies? How does the policy construct that group or groups, what kind of agency does it give them? What are the assumptions and values of the policy? What vision or model of society, and/or of community, does the policy promote? Which instruments does it use to achieve that model? Last, but not least, how are success or, alternatively, failure, assessed and explained?

The described focus inclines the choice of methods toward the group of post-positivist approaches variously referred to as discursive, interpretative or social constructionist (Hodgson and Irwing 2007, 7). As noted above, these approaches see policymaking as a fundamentally political and contested process, involving the construction and negotiation of different elements. In this view, policy is understood as “a way of explaining and validating action, rather than simply a product of organizational behavior or governance” (Colebatch 2002, 80). Jenkins (2007, 21) qualifies this approach as that of anthropological “strangeness”—treating the notion of policy as something to be interrogated, rather than taken for granted; and to ask “what is policy, what does it do, what does it mean?”

The complexity of the topic means that the book does not fit easily into the boundaries of any particular discipline. Although the primary subject is education policy, and thus the methodology stems from public policy analysis, the broad interpretative framework used to situate and contextualize the processes of decision-making inevitably call for a rather high degree of interdisciplinarity. In this sense, explanatory paradigms borrow from political science, sociology, as well as social anthropology. The book makes use of historical and ethnographic research, as well as, in a small amount, of economic indicators. In the analysis of post-conflict dynamics, it relies on the interpretative strand in international relations. Finally, its discussion of trajectory of the focus of education policies from class, over nation, to ethnicity, operationalizes concepts of individual and group belonging and classification, which are traditionally placed within the realms of political philosophy or anthropology.

In terms of research techniques, the book relied on a mixture of methods. The content of policies was reconstructed through document analysis and followed up, when possible, by interviews. Documents that described and defined policies—including papers (“white papers”), guidelines, legal documents, party communiqués, and articles—were subjected to a critical discourse analysis (e.g., Fairclough and Wodak 1997) that aimed to identify the themes, topics, and assumptions in the policy discourse. In this process, specific attention was devoted to the following elements: agenda setting (i.e., what was the context in which the policy was developed and what were its explicit goals and purposes); problem identification (i.e., what was the

problem that the policy aimed to address); selection of instruments (i.e., which particular policy measures and instruments were taken and how they were justified); and texts relating to policy implementation and/or evaluation (i.e., how was the success of the policy assessed and what were the perceived problems, etc.). In the cases of more recent events, interviews were also used to clarify the perspectives of particular policymakers and other relevant persons; when this was not possible (e.g., in the case of communist-era policies whose creators had passed away, or in domains where this is highly politically sensitive), secondary sources, including news and articles in print and electronic media, were compared in order to try to assess the intentions of different actors. In this context, the research made use of archival materials, as well as texts that were available online.

The analysis in the book proceeded along a set of steps, whose objective is to underline the complexity and interrelatedness of various factors that influence the decision-making processes and design of particular policies. First, the process of policymaking was reconstructed, and the success of policies evaluated, from the perspective of “objective” problems or issues the policy in question aimed to resolve. The next step tried to assess the context and rationale for the introduction of particular policies, first, by looking deeper into the level of implicit assumptions and notions used in the argumentation, and second, by interpreting these ideas and assumptions within their specific historical, social, and political contexts. The ensuing step focused on different levels of meaning attributed to aspects of these policies and, in particular, the ways in which these meanings were used to construct and define group identities. In the next step, this construction is framed within the broader historical, political, and social context, which provides the way to analyze different rationales and reasons for the development of specific policies. Finally, the implications of these developments are considered in terms of their likely impact on the social and political dynamics in former Yugoslavia, as well as in the ways that they shape and define the concept of the role of education and education policy in the society.

The book is divided into five chapters. The Introduction contextualizes this text politically, historically, and (inter)disciplinarily, and elaborates the theoretical and methodological background, scope, and structure of the volume. Part Two focuses on education policymaking

during communism/socialism, in particular focusing on the “vocation-oriented education” reform. Covering the period from the mid-1960s until the beginning of the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, the chapters examine the context and background of the reform, and offer a deeper analysis of its explicit and implicit goals, especially in terms of the student protests at the end of the 1960s and beginning of 1970s.

Part Three begins after the end of the wars for the division of former Yugoslavia, after the last country in the region, Serbia, began its democratic transition. It offers an in-depth analysis of the education reform started by the first post-Milošević government, and the way in which a particular policy development—the simultaneous introduction of religious and civic education to public schools in Serbia—was used as a political strategy in order to secure the support from the diverse body of voters. It investigates how education policies aimed to respond to presumed political preferences, and how, in this process, they structured and channeled particular political, social, and class identities. Specifically, it aims to show how the issue of class reproduction, which formed the gist of education reforms implemented during socialism, was replaced by the focus on identity politics that came to dominate the political struggles in most of the successor states of former Yugoslavia.

Part Four further develops the discussion on the issue of identity politics in education policy. It focuses on the processes of ethnic mobilization that resulted in the development of higher education aimed at particular ethnic minority groups in the aftermath of the conflicts during the breakup of former Yugoslavia. It offers a comparative analysis of the development of higher education policies related to the accommodation of minority rights and demands in the post-conflict societies in Kosovo, Sandžak (south Serbia), and Macedonia. This part aims to show how the local political dynamics of ethnic bargaining intersected with international intervention and state building, under the overarching framework of post-conflict development, to create novel and multiple channels and venues for the construction and expression of particular identities through education policies and institutions.

Part Five summarizes the results of the analyses presented in the preceding chapters and offers some thoughts for further consideration. It looks at the transformation of policies from the centralized type of policymaking that characterized the communist/socialist period of Yugoslav history, over the early years of transition and political

pluralism, to the contemporary multiethnic and multicultural societies in the successor states of the former Yugoslavia. Summarizing the findings of the analysis of the social and political drivers of these transformations, in the concluding part, the book discusses the implications of these dynamics for the future of education policy in the Western Balkans and beyond.

CHAPTER 2

Vocationalizing Education: Conflict, Cohesion, and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia

Introduction

The most comprehensive and overarching education reform in socialist Yugoslavia was introduced in the 1970s, and is known as vocation-oriented education.¹ Of course, various changes had already been implemented during, as well as in the aftermath of, World War II: teaching was modernized, and curricula purged of “bourgeois” elements, replaced by the ideology of dialectical materialism. The structure of the education system, however, had essentially been inherited from the pre-war Kingdom of Yugoslavia. What changed significantly was the intake. In 1973, there were already almost a million students in secondary education (EP January 20, 1975). The percentage of highly educated individuals was lower, but still expanded impressively: from 1.301 in 1954, the number of university graduates in 1965 had reached almost 14.000 (La Documentation Française 1968, 18). At the time,

¹ The reform, known as “usm(j)ereno obrazovanje” (Serbo-Croatian) or “usmerjeno izobraževanje” (Slovenian), was variously translated as “vocational education,” “directed education,” “career-oriented” or “career-directed” education. In this text, the first solution is given preference, but in order to distinguish it from vocational education, which refers to job training or secondary schooling job preparation, the policy is referred to as vocation-oriented education (VOE) reform.

students in higher education institutions constituted 0.85% of the total population, compared to 0.65% in Switzerland, 0.6% in France, or 0.45% in Italy (La Documentation Française, 19). The challenges brought about by rapid massification precipitated the reform as one of the most ambitious projects that mobilized education in response to social and political change.

Although more substantial shifts in education policy were perceptible already in the 1960s, the reform was officially inaugurated in 1975, as part of more profound transformation of the Yugoslav federation embodied in the 1974 Constitution. The Constitution divested a great portion of decision-making powers to the six constituent republics, and gave autonomous status to the two provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo, of the biggest republic, Serbia. The change was precipitated by a similar reorganization of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), reflecting the growing importance of the nationality factor in Yugoslav society as a whole and in party decision making in particular (Burg 1983, 34).

The reform followed the general political direction towards decentralization. Within the framework and ideology of self-management, the regulation of education devolved from the federal to the level of municipalities and specific institutions. Schools were transformed into self-managed interest communities (SMICs)² governed by councils,

² SMICs are one of the organizational peculiarities of Yugoslav self-management, designed to aid the integration of public institutions (such as schools) with their environment (enterprises, factories, and political councils). The Resolutions of the 10th Congress offer the following definition: "Self-managed interest communities are organized around a certain or a number of closely related educational programs or activities. SMICs must include the equal representation, through delegates, of the working people in the fields of education and training, and the working people in those fields and communities that have a direct interest in particular programs or activities in education and training. Decision-making in SMICs is based on programs of development, on the financial means that have been delegated by the working people, and on the basis of self-management. SMICs are responsible for their work to the workers in basic units of associated labor (BOALs) and other working people. SMICs and their BOALs are integrated in pre-school and elementary education on the basis of territory, and in secondary education on the basis of profession" (LCY 1974, 203–204). BOALs were defined as "a functional whole that is capable of performing an overarching

which included the representatives of the local workers' councils, politicians, and parents. Simultaneously, financing underwent a significant transformation: between 1968 and 1974 not less than eleven laws and regulations were adopted, first introducing specific funds for education within the federal budget, and then quantitative and qualitative criteria for the financing of particular institutions (Bogavac 1985). More importantly (and controversially), the reform radically altered the structure of the education system. It abolished the division between general secondary education, which prepared students to enter university, and that of the vocational type, which usually led to the labor market.

The transformation turned out to be bureaucratically complex and burdensome, which lead to pronounced differences in the level and speed of implementation across republics. Almost until September 1975, it was openly discussed whether the reform should be postponed; the media were full of stories of "hot summer," alluding to the intensive political work needed to push forward the reform before the official start of the school year. Although hardly anyone dared question the ideological basis of the reform, reactions from the society were predominantly negative. Teachers criticized it as "imposed from above," parents disputed it as constraining the choice of schools to which they could enroll their children, and students hated it because it burdened the already heavy curricula. To this day, the majority of teachers and educators in the successor states of former Yugoslavia remain adamant that the vocation-oriented education reform literally "destroyed education." Although these sentiments can, at least in part, be attributed to the ways the legacy of communism is constructed as a whole (cf. Todorova 2010), it still merits asking why the reform was pursued regardless of negative reactions. Despite frequent proclamations of politicians and administrators that the reform would start yielding positive results once it is "fully implemented," vocation-oriented education, with all of its problems, remained relatively unchanged literally until the breakup of Yugoslavia. In some cases, in fact, it was repealed only

program of education, training and/or research, which can be valorized and used as the basis of acquiring income, as well as for the self-management of associated laborers" (ibid.).

by the laws of the newly established independent republics after their secession from former Yugoslavia.

Overall, analyses of education policymaking under communism tend to attribute this lack of flexibility to the totalitarian nature of the regimes in question (e.g., Ewing 2002; David-Fox and Péteri 2000; Dunstan 1992; Fitzpatrick 1979). However, this argument could not easily be extended to Yugoslavia. Although the reform bears a number of similarities to the transformations of education systems in countries of the Eastern Bloc at the time, especially in terms of the emphasis on the practical, i.e., “vocational” aspects of education, as well as in terms of the overall ideology, the specific historical and political context in which it was developed suggests that it should be studied as a case in its own right, rather than just a specimen of education policies under communism. After the break between Tito and Stalin following the resolution of the Communist International in 1948, Yugoslavia pursued its own path of socialist development, which included political non-alignment, workers’ self-management, and a higher degree of civil freedoms than in the Soviet Union or its satellites. Keen on maintaining good relations with the West, the regime in Yugoslavia was willing to show openness and flexibility, especially in the matters related to education and culture. Thus, ideological “rigidity” can hardly be the explanation for either the introduction of the VOE reform or adherence to it despite the lack of public consensus or clearly demonstrable successes (cf. Zgaga 2007, 68).

From its introduction, it was clear that VOE was seen not just as a (possibly long-overdue) solution to the problems in education, but also as an integral and highly important aspect of the overall transformation of political and social institutions that sustained Yugoslav socialism. In the preparatory document for the 10th Congress of the LCY, Đurišić writes: “Social changes going on in our country on the basis of the implementation of the constitutional amendments from 1971 and the new Constitution, represent a turning point in the direction of the implementation of the fundamental principles of the organization of the self-managed socialist society and a big step from the normative to the real (...) the changes in the material basis of our society lead to education becoming the central strategic point of the development of our society as a whole” (Đurišić 1973, 3). This implies that VOE deserves to be analyzed not only as a historically curious

case of communist-era policymaking, but also as a policy that aimed to address the contradictions of Yugoslav socialism through education institutions and practices, and thus offers important insights into the ways in which the social roles and purposes of education were framed and constructed in socialist Yugoslavia before it fell apart.

This chapter will analyze the introduction of vocation-oriented education in Yugoslavia as an instance of education policymaking. It will begin with the time in which cracks in the structure of the federation became evident, and end with the time when vocation-oriented education was abandoned to more conservative and nationalist policies at the eve of Yugoslavia's dissolution. The chapter will first look at the discourse of the reform, in order to understand the problem (or problems) that the reform identified and attempted to solve. It will then look at how successful it was in this, and at the possible reasons for its failure. The analysis will attempt to identify the deeper structural causes and tensions that prompted the reform, in the context of social and class divisions, manifested through eruptions of popular discontent that started challenging the very premises on which the Yugoslav federation was founded. The main argument is that policies developed at the federal level attempted to "capture" and transform what the political actors of the day perceived as the key social tensions and cleavages in the given period of real socialism. In line with the premises introduced in the opening chapter, these tensions are not seen as immanent, but as socially created. In the end, the chapter will attempt to demonstrate the links between these policies and the social divisions that contributed to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

2.1. The Reform

The seeds of the education reform were sown in a number of documents that presented the essence of the federation's reform, in particular the Resolutions of the 10th Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (1973) and the Basis of the ideational platform for the self-managed socialist transformation of education and training in SFRY (Đurišić 1974). The Resolution on the tasks of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in the socialist self-management transformation of education was adopted in 1974. Given the leading role

of the League of Communists in defining public policy in Yugoslavia, this represented sufficient political vetting of the concept. The Law on Vocational Education was passed later in the same year. The implementation of the reform began in the academic year 1975/6 in Croatia and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina; it was agreed that the full implementation in all republics and autonomous provinces would begin by the academic year 1979/80. The task of designing the reform itself was entrusted to Stipe Šušar, at the time the Secretary for Education, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Croatia. Šušar was a relatively young politician who had risen to prominence after the purges of the Croatian League of Communists that followed the Croatian Spring—a fact that, as we shall see later, is not irrelevant for the understanding of his role in the reform. He described the theoretical and ideological framework and rationale of the reform in the book aptly titled “School and factory” (Šušar 1977).

The reform documents clearly envisaged the reform as the most important turning point in the history of Yugoslav education. Šušar writes: “If we want to see the transformation of education and training as an unavoidable part of the ongoing socialist revolution, and conceptually base it on the Marxist critique of the class society of exploitation, then its final implementation should be seen in the abolishment of all forms and causes of the class division within the society” (1977, VII). In other words, what the VOE reform set out to do was nothing less than to transform the fabric of the society itself, placing it back on the “true” path of socialist development. The case for reform was built through a mixture of the general critique of the existing state of socialist development and specific criticism addressed at different characteristics and the performance of the education system. The way in which the two were combined provides not only an overview of the key elements of the reform, but also an insight into the social and political tensions that constituted its background of reform.

2.1.1. Education and the Marxist personality

One of the most relevant tasks entrusted to education was socialization of new generations into norms of thinking and behavior deemed appropriate for the development of a wholesome socialist personality. In the preparatory document for the Resolutions of the 10th Congress,

Đurišić writes: “the self-managed society requires, thus, a versatile developed personality, capable not only of comprehending and understanding social processes, but also of undertaking an active creative function in the development of these processes and in their management in the increasingly complex conditions of life and labor” (1973, 10). The Resolutions further transformed this analysis into the conclusion that “the entire socialist education and training of both young people and adults, which is continuous, must be organized in a way that represents a substantial contribution to the free, versatile developed socialist personality, and constitutes a necessary factor in the development of socialist self-managed social relations and the productive forces in the society” (LCY 1974, 204).

There was a pronounced element of individual development entailed in the reform; however, the task of the reform was to direct it toward the nurturing of characteristics desirable within the framework of self-management socialism. This contradiction between individual freedom and constraints generated by the social and political context informed, to a high extent, both the content and the context of the reform. The question, thus, became: how to design education policies in a way that ensures individuals will behave in a way that is conducive to the development (or, as will be demonstrated shortly, even mere survival) of the existing system? This question was reflected in the emphasis on the economic roles of education.

2.1.2. Education and economy

The relationship between education and economy was the key element. Education was essential in preparing young people for work and the active participation in the labor force, which, in Marxist terms, represented the fundamental element of social reproduction and development. Đurišić, for instance, writes: “Concerning the influence of education on the overall societal development, we should primarily emphasize the economic function of education, which in the past has been most often neglected in favor of its cultural and humanist function (...) Studying and emphasizing the economic function of education is of special importance to us because of the efforts to develop our society and increase social and individual living standard as soon as possible” (1973, 4).

Of course, connecting education to economic development is not a particularly exceptional policy goal. However, the words “as soon as possible” reveal a sense of urgency that needs to be interpreted in the context of the economic trends emerging at the time. By the beginning of the 1970s, Yugoslavia had begun to show signs of economic decline. Reforms implemented in the 1960s, which ushered in a limited form of market socialism as a remedy to the stagnating economy, did not produce the expected outcomes. The period between 1966 and 1968 saw a severe recession: in 1968, unemployment figures stood at 7.2%, but it is likely that they underestimated by at least 3% (as well as calculated on the basis of employed in public service/actively looking for employment, which hardly represented the real situation; cf. Woodward 1995, 197). This represented a serious problem, not only in economic, but also (and more importantly) in social and political terms. Socialist Yugoslavia centered community life around labor: to be unemployed meant being “excluded from full membership in society... a loss of full citizenship rights, a second-class status, a disenfranchisement” (Woodward 1995, 4). The end of unemployment was therefore “a minimal condition—*sine qua non*—of socialist society” (3). Although, curiously, there was no popular protest in the first years of the recession—something Woodward calls a “policy paradox” (11)—a storm was brewing on the horizon.

Education was thus invested with the hope of reversing these trends by boosting employment and economic growth. Beždanov writes: “Although the Resolutions of the 10th Congress on education were being ‘written’ for many years, only now have the conditions and adequate social and ideal-political climate been created that will allow to conduct radical changes in this aspect of social policy. The new concept of the system and policies for education and training cannot wait for the ‘better times’—it’s not a proposal or construction for the future, but a program of changes that need to be implemented immediately” (Beždanov 1975, 65). Thus, the task of the reform was to transform education in a way that would enable it to restart economic growth.

2.1.3. Education and the labor market

One of the main problems, it was argued, was that education did not sufficiently prepare students to successfully enter the world of work,

that is, the labor market, and apply the knowledge and skills attained in their professions. Đurišić writes: "Efficiency and productivity of the work in education is unsatisfactory and below the average social productivity in other spheres. The main causes of this phenomenon should be sought in the separation of education from other spheres of labor and from their needs (...) Insufficient efficiency of education manifests itself in a myriad ways: from the 'production' of inadequate human resources in terms of profession, knowledge and skills, to the high percentage of dropout, repetition and extension of the learning periods" (1973, 35). Specific attention was directed to what was perceived as the failure of education to instruct young people in polytechnics, which, it was argued, also prevented their direct integration in life, practice, self-management, and productive labor. The system was described as "static" and "hermetically isolated from the changes in the outside world" (Bogavac 1980, 300), especially from the swift changes in modes of production, science, and technology.

The sources of this failure were found in the structure of the education system, which, according to its critics, entailed a "dualism" by separating the education for work from more general education leading to university studies. This dualism was first and foremost located in the structure of secondary education, which included two types of schools: vocational/technical, focused on practical and applicable knowledge that prepared students for direct entry into the labor market; and general gymnasiums, from which students moved into further (mostly university) education. Đurišić summarizes this critique: "Thus, within our education system, after elementary education, there exists, broadly, two unequal paths: one automatically predisposes young people for tertiary or higher education, and the other is a 'short path,' preparing them for immediate employment in different spheres of labor (primarily in production), giving them little (but formal) chance to continue onto tertiary education. The first path consists of gymnasiums and some vocational schools, while the second are workers' and industry schools. Such a system had led to a situation in which certain social strata are reproducing themselves, their structures and their socio-economic positions, and with this their social power" (1973, 36).

Apparently, there was another dimension to the "dualism" between education-for-further-education and education-for-a-profession. Although at one point Đurišić claims that "emphasizing the social

and class component does not mean favoring one category of population over another but, on the contrary, ensuring equal conditions in education for all citizens, exclusively according to their intellect and will” (36), in the same text he further narrows down his critique by saying: “The opportunity for overcoming class and social differentiation is diminished, and, objectively, a basis for the reproduction of intelligentsia outside the strata of workers has been created, as well as a basis for the monopolization of certain forms and levels of education, and through this the key positions in the society, which is increasingly realizing the importance of education for development” (36).

2.1.4. Education and class

Thus, the problem was not only the early streaming within secondary education; it was also that—according to the analyses—this streaming was preventing access to the levels of education that were seen as the sites of the “reproduction of intelligentsia”; in other words, to universities. Main sites of this problem were gymnasiums (“classical gymnasiums”). The media described their reform as the “neutralization of the main field of social inequalities” (*Borba* December 4, 1973). Resolutions of the 10th Congress stated clearly: “Overall organization, forms and content of VOE should be organized in the way which would allow learners to transfer immediately from different levels of VOE to work in different professions (...) all levels and forms of education after elementary school should allow both the inclusion in the labor process and into further permanent education. No school or form of education should be allowed to prepare young people exclusively for university studies” (LCY 1974, 213).

Thus, one of the main objectives of the reform was to stop the reproduction of social inequalities through education. This reproduction, it claimed, was primarily taking place through the dualism of classical and vocation-oriented secondary education. This was also contributing to the low productivity of education and the low employability of graduates in the labor market. The Resolutions summarized: “The League of Communists reminds educational institutions of their obligation to contribute to the overcoming of contradictions between intellectual and physical labor, to develop awareness of equality and connections between our nations and nationalities, brotherhood and

unity, Yugoslav socialist patriotism, readiness and responsibility for the active defense of our country, to raise in the spirit of humanism, internationalism and cooperation of all progressive forces in the world that fight for the victory of socialism and communism (...)” (1974, 205), and recommended that all concerned actors:

(...) ensure that Marxism, as the ideology of the LCY and the scientific basis for the development of socialist self-managed society, is the ideational basis for the entire field of education and training; that young people and adults are enabled to work and develop a creative relationship towards labor; (...) to create, through the comprehensive reform of the system of education and training, conditions to improve the efficiency of education, improvement of the structure of education institutions, faster eradication of illiteracy, elementary education for the active population and overall improvement of educational attainment; contribute to the readiness and competence of the young people and adults for general defense and social self-protection; [and to] contribute to the decrease in the influence of social and other inequalities on the conditions and outcomes of education, as well as to the overall reduction of social inequalities (1974, 206).

2.1.5. Education and decentralization

The decentralization of governance, already begun under the self-management transformation in the early 1960s, was continued with the aim to further remove education institutions from the direct control of the central state authorities (cf. Đurišić 1973, 4–11; LCY 1974, 200). Funding reforms devolved the responsibility for the distribution of education funds from the federation to the republics (ibid., 18, 200). Schools were reorganized into the basic units of associated labor (BOALs), which were to be closely connected with their social and economic environments, especially the productive facilities. BOALs in education were further integrated into the self-managed interest communities (SMICs). On the primary and pre-school level, the principle of organization was primarily territorial, which meant that schools and organizations from one municipality would be integrated in a SMIC; on the secondary level, the principle of organization was both territorial

and professional, meaning that schools were integrated with the production units from the same or surrounding municipality that shared the same professional “orientation.”

Organization of education on the basis of the territorial (geographical) principle meant that parents were not free to choose the preferred school for their children, but rather expected to enroll them into the one closest to the place where they lived. Besides the vague hope that this could also contribute to the breaking of social stratification between those who attended gymnasiums and those who attended secondary vocational schools, the basic idea was that this change would contribute to the stronger integration between education and production. Simply put, children were expected to attend a school, and later get working experience (eventually becoming employed), in their local environment.

2.1.6. Education and production

Education and production sectors were supposed to closely inform each other in a process of perpetual adjustment: the production sector would define what kind of skills and knowledge it requires, and the education sector would provide workers with a corresponding set of skills. The idea was that this would reduce, if not completely abolish, the perceived mismatch between the knowledge and skills transmitted through the education system and the needs and demands of the labor market, thus both lowering unemployment and reducing the costs of labor transition. Šuvar elaborated: “The organization of associated labor for material production or a social activity must be the source of the reform of education. How? By saying: we need people with these professional skills and those social skills; we ask those of you in education institutions to build, develop, educate and train such people, and we will provide funding. This is the exchange of labor with mutual accountability” (1977, 112).

The idea presumed substantial structural changes in secondary education, introducing a unified secondary education system, which involved five stages. The first stage, known as “joint foundations” (*zajedničke osnove*), was to be common and mandatory for all students in secondary education. Common foundations contained a mixture of the general education in social and natural sciences that was to provide

students with a sufficient basis should they choose to continue education. After two years of secondary education, curricula became diversified according to profession; thus, students could get shorter or longer training for a specific vocation, or choose to go directly into the labor market. Secondary education programs that offered classical knowledge were reduced. The majority of education programs and institutions were restructured so as to prepare for specific professions or “vocations” (profiles); thus, education for a profession became obligatory. Students who continued professional training in schools were able to go into work after one or two years, depending on the chosen profiles, or into further education—universities or higher vocational schools.

The intention was to abolish the separation of these two paths: students who opted for entering the labor market after short cycles of secondary education could still return to secondary or go into tertiary education after having spent some time in productive labor. Šuvar argued: “The point of the introduction of the joint foundations for vocational education is to give to all young people an equal start for different forms of further education. The joint foundations, now comprising the first two years of secondary school, should provide, for the young generation entering vocational education, not just a satisfactory but also an equal education and culture, thus providing the basics for maximum mobility later in life, and securing selection according to capabilities, and not according to inherited circumstances” (1977, 118).

2.1.7. Education and the value of labor

As can be clearly seen from the discourse of the reform, this wasn’t just a technical shift. Its objective was to change the social perception of the relative value of professions. Šuvar criticized what he saw as persistent higher valuing of “intellectual” professions and corresponding consistent devalorization of workers, that is, professions related to production: “At the bottom of our social consciousness, the peasants still hope their children would obtain a job ‘fit for a gentleman,’ while workers want to escape their positions as well. Ambitions formed in the old social conditions are passed on to the children. This represents a form of social pathology” (Šuvar, October 29, 1977).

By providing everyone (regardless of whether they wanted it or not) with “hands-on” experience in production, he argued, the

students would come to see the process of production differently, and thus would be more motivated to go into productive professions; this would stop the “population pressure” on higher education which, the policymakers argued, was overburdening the sector and contributing to low productivity and high unemployment. This is why the reform contained both the aspects of training (for, or on, the job) and education in the broader, philosophical sense: it entailed the learning of practical skills and streamlining of students toward a future profession, but also an emphasis on education in Marxism through theory and practice, the combination of which was intended to give the students a better insight into the history, struggles and present-day needs of the working class, which, it was argued, they would or should all aspire to belong to. Šuvar summarized the essence of the reform:

The key question is whether education contributes to renewal and reproduction of class differences, or whether it diminishes and abolishes them...Even today, we still judge young people in accordance to who their ancestors are, and not who they themselves are or who they could be...We pay attention to who were his grandmother, grandfather, father. This shows that the class conflict in the socialist revolution has retained a form of division, also on the basis of social background. Some families were on the side of the revolution; some families were on the side of the counterrevolution. And because our public education is not strong enough to stop the reactionary upbringing in the family, there are high chances such a family will produce a reactionary offspring, or at least a petit bourgeois. (1977, 92)

And concluded: “The class function of education, in our society, unlike in the societies of exploitation, is or should be not to help people escape the working class, but to enable them to belong to it” (93).

The main ideas emerging from the policy documents analyzed here suggest that the vocation-oriented education reform was much more than a restructuring of the system. It aimed to fundamentally transform the relationships between education and labor in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The efforts to change the organization of education and link it more systematically to the labor

market were, in fact, mechanisms for broad social changes. Most importantly, it aspired to rectify the inequalities that were beginning to surface in the face of the official proclamation of a “classless” society. The following paragraphs will offer some explanations why it failed, and then look at other reasons and rationales that underpinned it.

2.2. Power and Failure

From the very beginning, despite strong ambition and forceful argumentation, the implementation of the reform encountered a number of serious obstacles. Many educators and experts who worked on the reform criticized the speed with which it was introduced, as well as the lack of preparation and neglect in ensuring the existence of necessary prerequisites for its successful functioning (Milenović 1985). Teachers and unions repeatedly asserted they needed more time to prepare for the implementation of the new curricula and educational plans; some of them were even hinting that the reform was “forced.” As a result, the reform was not introduced in all parts of the federation at the same time: in fact, only Croatia and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina were ready to begin with the reform from the academic year 1975/6, while other systems committed to implementing it by 1979/80 at the latest. This also created additional pressure on those who were “lagging behind” to increase the speed of the reform without paying attention to the practical aspects of its implementation (Milenović 1985).

As it turned out, establishing the links between education and the productive sector was more difficult than initially assumed. The reform projected that the larger part of vocational training would be carried out in factories, enterprises, and production, giving young people a firsthand experience of work in their future professions (cf. “Šuvarice na probi” October 29, 1977). However, it seems as if industry did not fully embrace the idea. The rate at which secondary education students were accepted and integrated into production varied significantly from enterprise to enterprise; although there were examples of good cooperation between schools and factories, those where trainees were accepted only to satisfy legal requirements, but were not really integrated into the production process, seemed much more numerous.

This meant that secondary school leavers were not particularly well prepared to make the transition into the labor market (Milenović 1985, 623). Similarly, the production sector, with some exceptions, did not really show the incentive in terms of participating in the management of education. Milenović criticized: “Burdened with traditional habits and concepts concerning qualified labor and the models of their education, production, or at least some of its parts, was not ready to accept the young generation that had received higher levels of general education, and was supposed to be prepared for the direct inclusion into the work process through the education/work apprenticeship (...) In the increasingly difficult [economic] conditions, the units of associated labor failed to provide a realistic planning of human resources and educational needs, which had a negative effect on the development of the network of schools for vocation-oriented education” (1985, 615).

Although there was a pronounced tendency among the education experts at the time to contribute the failure of functional integration of education and work to mistakes in the planning stage and/or the lack of good will in the production sector, there is a more important underlying cause that merits explaining. Namely, what the architects of the education reform could not predict, and its critics dared mention only quietly, was that in the period of introduction and initial implementation of the reform the economy took a further downward plunge. Production outputs stopped rising, and growing unemployment—already a consistent trend since the 1960s—reached a record high (Woodward 1995). In this context, a policy that hinged on the expectation that the economy would be ready or willing to integrate thousands of new job seekers was bound to fail.

However, the data from that period hint that the problem was bigger than just the structural mismatch between education and employment. Firstly, the growth of unemployment was particularly pronounced in two categories of the population: those dubbed “first entrants” into the labor market (thus, freshly graduated); and those with post-primary education (it should be noted that the category “higher education” at the time included everyone with completed secondary education and higher). Secondly, points in time when both groups experienced sharp increase in unemployment overlap with the period of preparation of the education reform (1968–70) and with the period when the first graduates of the VOE reform reached the labor

market (1979). The evidence, thus, seems to suggest that not only did the reform not succeed in establishing better functional integration between education and work, but also *might have contributed to or increased their actual mismatch*. Neither the Yugoslav government nor education experts examined the nuances of unemployment in Yugoslavia: in a socialist country, which had previously been committed to full employment, admitting to the existence of a structural mismatch between education and work could have provoked serious political tension. This, in turn, made acquiring of any deeper understanding of the real rate of employment of VOE graduates rather difficult: "Little attention was given to the faster rate of growth in unemployment, the disproportionately high numbers among women, youth, and unskilled workers, and the shift over time from frictional to deeply structural causes, whereas it became ritual to acknowledge the very high rates in the southern and eastern parts of the country as if there were nothing to explain. Explanations for unemployment came largely from economists (...) but the subject never attracted political analysts." (Woodward 1995, 194).

Even within such a chaotic landscape, it is possible to deduce that VOE was not succeeding in one of its main objectives: to create more employment opportunities for graduates. Perhaps the fact that most secondary school students attempted to pursue further education instead of going into work can be, in part, attributed to this lack of successful mechanisms of transition from education to work. Already in 1976/77, the number of students who opted for the classical-type education, which represented the easiest path to university, was as high as 30% ("Putevima borbe..."). The gymnasium remained the most popular choice of secondary education graduates; in the ensuing years, its attraction continued growing, up to the point in which over 70% opted for continuing general education (NIN August 16, 1981; Milenović 1985). This lead Milenović to conclude that "(e)valuation after common foundations [first two years of secondary education] shows that students most frequently opted for continuing general education (70%), continuing vocational education (30%), while no one chose short cycles for direct integration into work. Since professional education did not determine the choice of future profession, in practice it proved to be dysfunctional" (1985, 619). Milenović was, in fact, stating that the majority of secondary school graduates

opted for continuing education at universities and higher vocational schools, instead of going into work; this was happening regardless of, or despite, the vocationalization of secondary education. In short, the reform had failed at another of its chief objectives: the transformation of social valorization of intellectual over manual labor.

To sum up, at least from the perspective of implementation, the vocation-oriented education reform appears to have been an outright failure. It did not succeed in increasing employment; it failed to provide the functional integration of education and labor industries, and, possibly, contributed to the deepening of the mismatch between the knowledge transmitted through education and skills required by the labor market; it increased the pressure on universities, thus both obviously failing to make the productive professions more attractive to secondary education graduates, *and* generating more potential unemployment. In terms of administration and governance, it represented a bureaucratic conundrum—few guidelines for implementation were ever issued; no new funding was provided for the equipment to upgrade work-oriented training—that earned it the reputation of being one of the least liked reforms in former Yugoslavia. Why, then, did VOE remain in place for so long?

One way of looking at the reform is to see it as the proof for the inferiority of long-term planning in the context of education policies, as opposed to flexibility and adaptation. From this perspective, it could be said that vocational education failed because it could not adapt to the changes in the economic circumstances, which resulted in the widening gap between education and the needs of the labor market, generating the cycle of further unemployment. Although a lot could be said about the validity of this concept of the market as a “fitness test,” the explanation itself contains at least a grain of truth: vocational education failed to generate the outcomes it committed to, in part, because the standards were set too high, especially given the changing social conditions and the overall economic stagnation at the time. However, another way of looking at the reform is to see it as an attempt to address deeper structural contradictions of the society, of which unemployment was but one of the manifestations. Stone writes: “Politicians always have at least two goals. First is a policy goal—whatever program or proposal they would like to see accomplished or defeated, whatever problem they would like to see solved. Perhaps more important,

though, is a political goal. Politicians always want to preserve their power, or gain enough power, to be able to accomplish their policy goals” (2002, 2).

The first part of this chapter dealt with the policy goals of the VOE reform. It concluded that the reform, for the most part, failed at fulfilling its objectives in the domain of policy. The ensuing part will try to assess what would have been its political goal. In order to do this, we need to take a step back and reexamine the historical and political context of the introduction of the VOE, not only in terms of the beginning of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, but also in terms of the preceding processes of state-building and societal (re)construction that followed World War II. In this context, the social conflicts that occurred in the period—including student and mass movements—are particularly important.

2.3. 1968–1971: Dissent and Non-Cohesion in Socialist Yugoslavia

The structural tensions that began to chip away at the core of the Yugoslav federation found their expression in the social movements and unrests that took place between 1968 and 1971. Among these, three had a direct connection to education, and particularly addressed the universities. The first was predominantly liberal in its demands, and reached its peak in the student protest and consequent occupation of the main building of the University of Belgrade in June 1968, although its political consequences were felt at least until 1975, if not later. The second, which also took place in 1968, was a protest of Albanian students in Kosovo, who demanded the establishment of a separate University of Prishtina that would be more open to Albanian language, literature, and history. The third event, taking place in 1970–71 in Croatia and known as mass movement (“Maspok”) or the “Croatian spring,” represented a nationalist mobilization that, although it was dealt with rather sharply and swiftly at the federal summit, motivated a large part of the constitutional reform and transformation of the federation that took place after 1974.

Of course, these were not the only, or isolated, expressions of dissatisfaction and dissent that happened in former Yugoslavia. Miners’

and workers' strikes took place during the 1950s and early 1960s. The gradual liberalization was already taking place in Slovenia. On the other hand, despite the decisive tightening of the policies of the League of Communists after the events that took place between 1968 and 1971, some protests continued, eventually morphing into large-scale popular mobilizations in the 1980s. However, the movements described here were the first to draw clear links between the tensions in the social structure and education. The reforms of education that happened after this period, thus, cannot be understood independently of them.

2.3.1. Belgrade 1968

Between 1966 and 1968, students and professors at Yugoslav universities began writing letters and staging demonstrations in support to student movements across the globe. In 1966, students of the University of Belgrade protested against the US invasion of Vietnam and expressed solidarity with the people of Vietnam. However, when they attempted to go out in a protest march, they were stopped by the police, resulting in a series of skirmishes that included the police entering the building of the University, which, in turn, prompted sharp criticism from both students and intellectuals since it was taken to represent a violation of university autonomy (Arsić and Marković 1985, 32). The protests that followed the incident, however, already expanded the scope of student critique by targeting both the police as an institution and Yugoslavia's foreign policy, in particular towards the US (33). In 1967, a group of students wrote a letter of support to the students and professors in Warsaw; this was the first time, however, that such action had a more "grassroots" nature, since it wasn't initiated by the leadership of the University committee of the League of Communists (58). In May 1968, during the student demonstrations in France, Belgrade students sent a letter to the Rector of the Sorbonne, criticizing his decision to lock the gates of the Nanterre campus. This possibly contributed to their increasingly critical attitude towards hierarchical structures—including the state, the police, and the university itself.

The first serious clash between the students and the police in Belgrade happened on June 2, 1968, following a seemingly random inci-

dent between students from the campus dormitories and voluntary workers stationed nearby. The reaction of the police, which applied excessive force after arriving at the scene and seriously wounded a student in the process, turned out to be the spark that was needed to ignite a much stronger flame. In the aftermath of the skirmish, the students formed an Action committee, demanding the immediate release of all apprehended students, repairs to all that had been wounded, and protection for the autonomy of the university. The next morning, a student march departed towards downtown Belgrade. Students carried pictures of President Tito, and shouted slogans such as "Tito, Party," "Do we have a Constitution?," "We want employment," and "Down with socialist bourgeoisie." Before reaching the bridge they encountered a police cordon, which attempted to prevent them from continuing the march. A standoff ensued, during which a delegation of governmental officials arrived; however—before or, according to some sources, during negotiations—the police attacked the students, using tear gas, batons and, at some point, firing weapons. The results were rather stunning—nobody was killed, but many students, including women, were severely injured. That very night, the Action committee issued a statement that summarized the positions and requests of the students.

One of the chief objectives of the statement was to dispel what students felt was a "negative" and "conceited" portrayal of the events in the media (Arsić and Marković 1985, 78). They openly criticized the "lies" in the news by Tanjug (the state news agency) and Belgrade newspapers, and demanded that their editors resign. But they also tried to make clear what it was that they were protesting against. Their resolution reads:

(1) We find the main problem to be the emergence of social inequalities. With this in view, we demand: a consistent distribution based on labor (...) and demand that the social structure of student body reflects the composition of our society (...) (2) The great number of unemployed is also a source of our rage. Thus we demand the abolishment of part-time work and support to young experts to prevent them from going abroad; (3) The existence of strong bureaucratic forces in our society demands: the democratization of all social and political organizations,

particularly the League of Communists; democratization of all media and the forming of public opinion; and freedom of assembly and protest...(4) Students are particularly embittered by conditions in our universities, and thus we demand the improvement of material conditions; equal participation of students in all fora where important questions are being resolved, especially if they pertain to students; we protest the emergence of clans and monopolies in certain departments; we demand the full and democratic appointment of all teaching staff; and we demand the free enrolment of students. (Action committee of protesters and the covenant of students in Residence halls, June 3, 1968, in Arsić and Marković 1985, 80)

The Council of the University of Belgrade, at an afternoon session on the same day, decided to respond to the “brutal treatment by the police” with a 7-day strike. However, on June 4, the police again entered the halls of the Academy of Arts in Belgrade, this time beating students. The students responded to this by the “occupation” of the University, where they decided to stay until their demands are met (*ibid.*, 84–85). The University of Belgrade was renamed “Red University Karl Marx” and students started wearing badges that portrayed a red pointer arrow in a blue circle, jokingly relating that the red referred to themselves (presumably, in the sense of pointing the way for social transformation) and the blue to the color of the police uniforms surrounding them.

The containment of the students by the police was not only symbolic: on June 4, 1968, the Secretariat for Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia issued a decree forbidding demonstrations or other events in all public spaces, effectively limiting the students to universities. The reactions of the public, however, were more positive: letters of support were coming from factories, as well as from other university centers. On June 5, students and professors from the University of Zagreb convened to discuss the events in Belgrade, but mutual differences lead them to issue two separate support letters—a sort of premonition of the divisions in the Croatian intelligentsia during the Croatian Spring two years later. Students at the University of Ljubljana, already protesting against the housing conditions, sent a message of support on June 6. In Sarajevo, the head of the Secretariat for Internal Affairs of

Bosnia and Herzegovina pre-emptively signed a decree almost identical to the one in Belgrade, citing the situation in Belgrade as the reason to ban all public gatherings, effective immediately (Arsić and Marković 1985, 98–103). In defiance of the decree, the students organized a protest march and clashed with the police. The governing structure at the University of Sarajevo, however, criticized these events as “illegal” attempts to solve issues outside of existing political structures (105–6).

From the very beginning, it was obvious that the student protest did not address only the concerns related to the immediate environment of universities, but had a much broader social dimension. For one, it addressed the problem of social inequalities, emphasizing the growth of the “red bourgeoisie,” the privileged bureaucratic social stratum that was expanding in a society where privileged elites were not supposed to exist; quite ahead of their time, the students understood egalitarian education as one where the student body would reflect the diversity of the entire population. The protest emphasized dire unemployment and clearly stated that the lack of work prospects was creating frustration among the young educated people. The second part of the Action-political program of Belgrade students, focusing primarily on issues of higher education, asked for the following: “(1) Undertake immediately the reform of education system, and adapt it to the needs of our economic, cultural and self-management development; (2) Implement the constitutionally guaranteed rights to equal education of all young people; (3) Adopt a law on university autonomy” (Arsić and Marković 1985, 107).

At that moment, the student protest represented probably the most radical critique leveled against the communist regime in Yugoslavia. Besides criticizing the lack of objectivity in the media coverage of student demonstrations, affirming the role of universities in the development of critical thinking, demanding more student participation and university autonomy—all of which would have been rather radical as it were—it “spilled over” the walls of the University literally and metaphorically, extending to issues such as economic reform, democratic control of government, freedom of expression and assembly, social inequalities, and the role of education in their reproduction. Thus, it represented not only an unwelcome, and certainly problematic, expression of dissent and conflict in a supposedly

well-functioning society; it was also a direct threat to the supremacy of the regime.

It comes as no surprise, then, that the government made every attempt to suppress and subvert the student protests as quickly as possible. Besides banning public demonstrations and cracking down on students physically, it also banned student newspapers—most famously, the paper of the students of the University of Belgrade, *Student*—and even required that students remove the pictures of Marx and Tito from the walls and poles around university buildings and dormitories (115). Rumors about the lack of unity between students began spreading; students denied them while calling for the release of all apprehended students, apologies from the press and investigation into violent incidents (111). Finally, a joint meeting of the Presidency and the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the LCY was called on June 9.

This was a definite sign that the regime took the events unfolding in the preceding days very seriously. After the meeting, President Tito addressed the nation in a televised speech, now widely acknowledged as having put an end to the student protests. In it, Tito displayed unprecedented political genius: instead of attacking or downplaying the students, as the police, media, and other politicians had done in the previous days, he addressed them directly and transformed their demands into a justification for the reform that would follow. However, at the same time, and not even too implicitly, he indicated what would follow. The way that the speech assigns culpability and intricately weaves these threats into a policy direction deserves to be quoted in its entirety.

When we say that student demonstrations went ahead of us, there is a question of whether there is a political background to this, whether someone is trying to hijack the political initiative we have started, in order to profit politically. I cannot get into this now. But I do say one thing, it is high time to remove the slowness, which has become prominent in solving different problems, and insufficient unity among the leading people in implementing these solutions (...) Economic and social reforms right now call for much more efficient measures and much quicker solutions to problems, so that people could be given a perspec-

tive despite the existing difficulties (...) When it comes to solving problems in education, for instance, we have been going around in circles for years. Until this day, we have not been able to resolve this issue. Especially in higher education. The employment of young university graduates with professional qualifications is another question (...) In view of these latest events, student demonstrations, I want to state my opinion (...) I think that the revolt of young people occurred spontaneously. But, slowly, as these demonstrations developed and passed from the streets to lecture halls at the university, they were infiltrated by elements that are foreign to us and not in socialist positions (...) who are against the economic reform. Now, we are working on directions that will be published tomorrow or in a couple of days. Then, it will be clear to everybody what we concluded in this session. It will also be clear that we take full responsibility for its implementation. And those among us who may not agree with it, who may depart from these decisions and express their own views, instead of supporting the implementation of our decisions—those will not have a place among us.” (Arsić and Marković 1985, 118–19, emphasis J.B.).

Tito’s speech introduced a number of ideas. Firstly, it put the spotlight on higher education, identified as the site of “problems.” Secondly, while describing the student revolt as “spontaneous,” he argued that it had become “infiltrated” from the outside, by people who are against both socialism and the governmental policies such as economic reform. Thirdly, Tito announced the ensuing reform, and explicitly said that the regime, from then onwards, would become significantly less tolerant towards those who disagree with it. He also used the occasion to explicitly deny the connection of the Belgrade protests with other student demonstrations happening in Europe at the time: “Some seem to think that what happened is the reflection of the events in France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, etc. This is not true. It is not. It is a reflection of our own weaknesses, which have accumulated and which we must start dealing with” (121).

The combination of recognition and self-criticism present in Tito’s speech proved sufficient for students to conclude the protest. They gladly accepted his words and chose to interpret them as acknowledgment

that their demands were just and well-founded, and as a promise that the League and Tito himself will see that they are addressed. In another speech delivered soon afterwards, however, Tito again reflected on student protests and made a much clearer indication of the policy direction that the government would take.

You are aware, comrades, that there have been different attempts by various personalities. Those that we had to deal with in universities even before the student revolt have appeared. They are certain professors, some philosophers, different Praxis members, and other dogmatists, including those who made different deformations in the State security. All that is somehow united today. Of course, they all work for themselves, but they are all united in an attempt to create a sort of chaos where they can manipulate. We must respond with decisive resistance, with a decisive “no.” Now, they are announcing a movement at the university. It’s not coming from students, it’s coming from people who want to create seeds of a pluralist political system (...) They go even further: they negate the working class as the main factor and pillar in the society. According to them, some wise guys, some technocrats should stand on a pedestal and run things (...) Is that really happening today in our country, is it possible that such people with such ideas are allowed to express them publicly, and we are still observing it peacefully? They don’t even belong where they are now [applause]. Should such people be allowed to educate our children at universities and in schools? They don’t belong there! [loud applause and cheering]. (Josip Broz Tito, in Arsić and Marković 1988, 132–33).

If students listened to Tito’s words carefully, they might have been able to foresee the consequences of the protest; probably many of them did. Besides the reforms mentioned in the speech, which eventually included education reforms, the other part of the response was much more direct and brutal: it began with accusations against, and culminated in 1975 with the expulsion of, the Praxis Marxists.

Who were these “certain professors, some philosophers, different Praxis members” from Tito’s speech? The name “Praxis Marxists” commonly refers to a group of Yugoslav intellectuals that became

associated with the Korčula summer school of philosophy, gathering around and publishing in the journal *Praxis* (Sher 1977). Though far from being ideologically uniform, most of the intellectuals associated with the group subscribed to a form of Marxist philosophy and critique closest to the Frankfurt school. They defined their role as the critique of all existing conditions and strove to establish a more basic, “purer” form of Marxism. Although some were already active before WWII and participated in the discussions that shaped the political portfolio of the Party and later League of Communists, the “school” reached the height of its intellectual development in the 1960s. The authors associated with *Praxis* were published and widely read both in and outside of Yugoslavia (the journal had an English language edition). The Korčula seminars attracted the *crème de la crème* of continental philosophy of the time: the 1968 session included Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, and Ágnes Heller (Sher 1977, 189).

It was not (only) their international popularity that brought the *Praxis* group under the lens of Tito’s regime. In mid-1960s, some of the writers associated with the group started publishing articles that formulated an increasingly critical analysis of Yugoslav socialism, including self-management and market economy. From the standpoint of “true” or original Marxism, they openly criticized market liberalism in the Yugoslav society, which they thought led to commodity fetishism. However, this does not mean they favored centrally planned Soviet-type economies. Sher writes: “The extent of the *Praxis* Marxists’ opposition to the market system is in fact matched only by their mistrust of the state-controlled economy of the Soviet model insofar as both, in their view, tend to deprive the producers of control over the products of their labor and especially over surplus value. What the *Praxis* Marxists would seem to advocate, instead, is a mixed system of market and plan on the basis of workers’ self-management—a system, however, in which neither market nor plan would have the alienating consequences they have in existing societies” (Sher 1977, 168).

Deep mistrust towards the forces of the market is also evident from the writing of some of the prominent names associated with the group. For instance, Stojanović wrote: “As long as it exists, the market will try to impose itself over society as the supreme regulator and criterion of human relations...The market reacts mainly to the existing level

of demand and creates artificial and even harmful demands. It thus comes into conflict with the mission of the socialist community, which seeks to humanize existing need and develop new, human needs... without rational control of economic tendencies by the associated producers, socialism in Marx's sense is out of the question" (Stojanović, quoted in Sher 1977, 170).

However, "rational planning" did not mean top-down, imposed planning but entailed a humanistic notion of rationality, which, as Sher noted, "may differ substantially from what a federal planning official or a local managerial specialist may see as being 'rational' from a purely economic standpoint" (1977, 169–70). Thus, their emphasis was on bottom-up, decentralized, inclusive decision-making processes, in a sense a "true self-management"—sometimes described as "democratic socialism" (e.g., Crocker 1983). This probably contributed to Tito's accusation that they were "creating seeds of a pluralist political system," via support to democratic decision-making, but also of "negating the working class as the main factor and pillar in the society," via criticizing the existing structure of self-management (cf. Sher 1977, 187–88). Of course, the biggest liability of the *Praxis* writings was the critique of the market mechanisms. In Yugoslavia, at the time experiencing the negative consequences attributable to the introduction of the market, its open criticism was bound to provoke more than just raised eyebrows from the ruling class.

Although *Praxis* was never an official group and the journal gathered varying amounts of contributors at different moments in time, some of the more prominent names associated with the movement were teaching at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade in 1968. They included Svetozar Stojanović, Mihajlo Marković, Ljuba Tadić, Zagorka Golubović, Miladin Životić, Dragoljub Mićunović, Trivo Indić and Nebojša Popov. After Tito's speeches hinted at the involvement of a "group of professors" from the Faculty of Philosophy in, presumably, inciting the students to protest, these eight—as well as their colleagues from Zagreb and other cities in Yugoslavia—became objects of legal processes whose objective was to discredit their "moral and political fitness" but also to introduce firmer ideological control over intellectual production in the country. The proceedings initiated against the "Belgrade eight" stand out both in terms of length and the mobilization of political resources they called for.

The backlash began with the closing down of the League of Communists' branches at the Departments of Philosophy and Sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade, with the explanation that "a certain number of communists in the branches at the Departments of Philosophy and Sociology have expressed ideological views and political behavior that is in open confrontation with the ideo-political line and principles of the LCY" (Popov 1987, 15). Between 1968 and 1970, pressure was sustained on the structures and committees of the Faculty of Philosophy to investigate the "moral and political fitness" of the said professors. Although the Dean of the Faculty could not refuse these orders, the initial conclusions of the Faculty-appointed commission were positive. During 1972 and 1973 the pressure on the departments and the Faculty of Philosophy continued, including an attempt to prevent the renewal of the contract for the assistant professor Indić, but failed (33). In 1974 a similar initiative came from the top of the University itself—again meeting resistance from both the Dean and student organizations. The regime, then, decided on a different strategy. In 1974, the Yugoslav Student Union was closed, and thus the students in Yugoslavia lost the opportunity to speak "in one voice." Later in the same year, the Law on Higher Education was amended so as to allow for direct intervention of the Parliament at the University "in case of grave threat to public interest." The Law left the definition of what the "public interest" was and thus threats to it were largely undefined, specifying only that "professors whose activities have contributed to the endangering of this interest can be put 'at disposal'" (Popov 1987, 159–60). "Being put at disposal" effectively meant they were forbidden to work in their previous posts and would have to await transfer to another institution (after some time, most of them were relocated into the newly-founded Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory).

What was the crime of these Praxis philosophers? Although they were teaching at the time of the 1968 protests, and thus probably provided the inspiration for at least some of the students who organized and participated in them, it would be a very far cry to hold this specific group of professors and teaching assistants accountable for the unrests. After all, it wasn't only the Faculty of Philosophy that participated in the demonstrations—many other schools, including, for instance, the School of Arts and the School of Civil Engineering, were

equally involved. Thus, it seems like it was not just the fact of students protesting, as the combination of their public visibility and ideas critical of the existing order, that were perceived as a threat. Tito, in his speech, even equated the Praxis Marxists with "...those who made different deformations in the State Security. All of that is somehow united today. Of course, they all work for themselves, but they are all united in an attempt to create a sort of chaos where they can manipulate." The way that he had dealt with the possible contenders for political power in the State Security in 1966 (by "purging" one of his closest associates, Aleksandar Ranković) did not bode well for the Praxis philosophers.

It comes as no surprise that, from the perspective of the regime, it was necessary to ensure that the "problematic" professors were removed from the university. However, it was also necessary to ensure events such as the 1968 protests would not happen again. Inevitably, this pointed to the need for making changes in the education system. However, before that, the regime faced two other waves of unrest: one in Kosovo, and one in Croatia.

2.3.2. University of Prishtina

The protest that happened later in the same year—1968—in Prishtina, the capital city of the Serbia's southern province of Kosovo, substantially differed from that in Belgrade. Albanians, which made a large majority of the province's population, spoke a language altogether different from Serbo-Croatian, spoken by Serbs as the province's biggest minority. The Albanian community was tightly knit and, for the most part, kept a traditional way of life, contributing to the distance between the two ethnic groups (cf. Ramet 1992a, 188–89). Albanians did not particularly like having been forcefully included in the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and many fought on the side of the occupying forces in World War II (cf. Denitch 1994). After the end of WWII, some of them formed separatist organizations that the communist regime eventually suppressed (cf. Ramet 1992a, 187), but the memory of it was relatively fresh in the minds of both major ethnic groups in the province. For these reasons, systematic efforts were made both to integrate Kosovo Albanians into the Yugoslav political system, and to develop Kosovo, which was by far the least developed part of the

country. Large proportions of federal aid went to the province, eventually creating resentment in other, more developed republics.

When demonstrations broke out in 1968, it appeared that the policies aimed at development and integration did not succeed. The Albanians protested what they framed as a systematic repression and violation of their rights, and demanded broader political, cultural, and linguistic recognition, as well as a right to secede from Yugoslavia, or republican status for the province. The protests spread to at least nine cities, including Prishtina in Kosovo and Tetovo, in Macedonia. The official toll was one death, at least forty persons injured, many more arrested, and substantial damage to property; the unofficial data put the number of deaths up to five (Prifti 1978, 222). A specific part of the protest was related to education: "A major demand of the demonstrators, most of whom were students, intellectuals, and professionals, concerned language rights. They called for the establishment of a 'national' university in Pristina, in which all instruction would be in the Albanian language. The demonstrators also called for language equality in matters of public administration, meaning that Albanian could be used, alongside Serbo-Croatian, in all legal documents and other pertinent government communications" (*ibid.*).

Although Prifti frames the issue primarily in terms of language, the political dimension was more complex. In 1968, there were already higher education institutions in Prishtina that had some instruction in the Albanian language, but they were officially part of the University of Belgrade. Demanding a "national" university in Prishtina, then, concerned not only the right to higher education in the mother tongue, but had a symbolic value in strengthening Albanian political identity in terms of providing space for the education of Albanian-speaking intellectual and political elites.

Despite initial repression, this time the regime actually accepted most of the protesters' demands, the right to secession notwithstanding. Ramet writes:

The federal government was not prepared to indulge in the partition of Serbia; nevertheless, ameliorative measures had to be taken. The demand for republican status was flatly turned down. Both Kosovo and Vojvodina, however, were granted some of the prerogatives of republics, and the modifier "socialist" was appended

to their official designations. In December, in another concession to the Albanians, Kosovo-Metohija was redesignated simply Kosovo, dropping the purely Serbian “Metohija,” and the Kosovars were also given permission to fly the Albanian flag alongside the Yugoslav (...) Finally, there followed the creation of an independent University of Pristina in 1969 and the rapid Albanianization of both faculty and student body in what had hitherto been a branch of the University of Belgrade. (Ramet 1992a, 191)

The University of Prishtina was officially established in 1969 and began operating as an independent institution in 1970. This can be considered the precedent that established a pattern in the formulation of claims to rights to education based on specific cultural and social identities in the former Yugoslavia. What it certainly did establish was a closer link between the Kosovo Albanian intellectual elites and their counterparts in Albania. Dragnich and Todorovich (1984, 164) write that “Belgrade could not provide either Albanian teachers nor Albanian textbooks (...) Tirana was more than glad to oblige. In ten years (1971–81) it sent to Kosovo 240 university teachers, together with textbooks written in the Albanian literary language.”

Although, to a certain extent, this was primarily circumstantial—given the relatively marginalized status of Albanians in pre-WWII Yugoslavia, as well as in the immediate aftermath of the war, it was not a surprise that there were few Albanian-speaking intellectuals as well as books in Albanian—it also pointed to a tendency in the treatment of identity-based claims: legal and administrative recognition, but very little substantial support or work on integration. Whether this was a reflection of the general hostility towards anything resembling nationalism by the political top, or a reflection of the more general pattern of majority-minority relations (cf. Ramet 1992a, 189), is a separate question. However, the accommodation of ethnic Albanian political claims by the opening of the University of Prishtina certainly established a path dependency. It showed that demands could be accommodated, as long as they were not challenging the structure of political power. However, the liberal and nationalist movements—both of which, albeit from different perspectives, aimed to transform the very premises of the regime—were dealt with in a very different manner.

2.3.4. Croatian Spring

The third protest that probably contributed to the atmosphere and conditions that ushered in education reform had the tone of nationalist awakening, however, intersected with certain liberal tendencies. It happened in Croatia in 1970 and 1971, earning the nickname “Croatian Spring” or “mass movement” (MASPOK).

The origins of the “Croatian Spring” can be traced to the specific position of Croatian communists after WWII. In the immediate aftermath of the war, Croatian communists, afraid of the potential dominance of Serbia, were in favor of a loose federation. The general liberalization, especially the market reforms introduced in the second half of the 1960s, provided the backdrop for the amplification of the voices that argued for the “exceptional” status of Croatia within SFRY and supported its self-rule. The top of the leadership of the League of Communists of Croatia at the time—Savka Dabčević-Kučar, Mika Tripalo, and Pero Pirker—were supportive of further reforms, and introduced the discussion of the reappropriation of a “loose federal model” during the 10th session of the League of Communists of Croatia (LCC) (Irvine 2008, 153). Rusinow writes extensively about this particular historical moment: “In the later 1960s, a group of younger, ‘progressive’ communist leaders came to power in Croatia (...) on a platform of further decentralization, democratization, and economic liberalism. Such a platform was seen and welcomed as consistent with Croatia’s long-term aspirations for a fairer deal in the Yugoslav federation (...) In seeking wider support in this political struggle for decentralized power, the Croatian new guard began to play with Croatian national sentiment, historically the easiest and surest way of arousing mass enthusiasm” (Rusinow 2008, 110–11).

To many people in Croatia, this was a clear and sufficient sign that nationalist sentiments were not “off the table” any more. The main lines of argumentation combined economic with cultural (and religious) grievances. On the economic front, the argument was that Croatia had been contributing disproportionately to the federal budget (mostly through tourism remittances), while the majority of the funds were being redistributed to the underdeveloped parts of Yugoslavia such as Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro. On the cultural front, the argument was that Croatian cultural and national identity was

being unduly repressed by the politics of the LCY. In 1967, 100 prominent Croatian intellectuals signed the Memorandum of the Matica Hrvatska that demanded that Croatian language be recognized as a separate and equal official language of the federation (at the time, the language was called Serbo-Croatian).

Not surprisingly, many of these grievances extended to education. Irvine (2008, 157) writes: "During the months after the tenth LCC plenum, LCC liberals repeatedly expressed their dissatisfaction with the 'incorrect' history being taught in the schools. In response to what they claimed was a biased and discriminatory program of study, LCC liberals proposed an educational plan for elementary and middle school aimed at the 'Croatinization' of instruction. Under this plan, 75 percent of instruction in history and literature would be required to treat Croatian topics. For many supporters of the Croatian Spring, increasing instruction in Croatian history and culture was essential to the success of the Croatian national movement."

Despite the fact that these proposals focused on primary and secondary, and not tertiary education, the universities occupied a very prominent, if not decisive, role in the Croatian Spring. It began in December 1970, when the first ever elections for the student vice-rector—a post created at the time to address student concerns related to university governance that largely surfaced as a consequence of the protests in 1968—were held at the University of Zagreb. Surprisingly, instead of the (semi-)official party candidate, the winner of the elections turned out to be Ivan Zvonimir Čičak. This was shocking from a number of perspectives: Čičak was not a Party member, and, on top of that, he was an open patriot and practicing Catholic (cf. Rusinow 2008, 167). Previously, he had abandoned membership in the official students' union due to self-confessed "extreme nationalist views" (Kesar, Bilbija, and Stefanović 1990, 631). The official student representatives tried to dispute the election results, but Čičak was supported by growing numbers of students and, even more importantly, by the Rector of the University of Zagreb, who announced within days that the elections were legitimate. In April 1971, the conflict between student groups during the elections for the Executive committee of the Zagreb students' union ended in further strengthening the positions of the right-leaning group, again with the support of the Rector (657–58).

During the spring of 1971, student politics at the University of Zagreb stopped being a matter of drawn-out discussions reserved for party cadres-in-training, and started attracting unprecedented student numbers, as well as substantial attention from the media. The student movement fitted the general mood in Croatia and articulated well the ideological positions from which the mass movement was born. Although the movement did keep its critique within the framework of socialism, this is where most of its similarities with the Belgrade student movement three years earlier stopped. The Croatian student movement openly endorsed a nationalist agenda, putting forward the claims for the rights of people in Croatia. It initially supported constitutional reforms and argued for the substantial transformation of the principles of economic and political distribution within the federation. Its critique of higher education chimed with this framework, focusing less on equality between the social strata, and more on equality (or fairer distribution) among republics, underlining their *national* character:

If this people and this country invest into our education in order to get the needed experts, do we not have the right to publicly state in front of other working people what we are fighting for and will continue to fight for in the future? Do we not have the right to say what we think is not right, is wrong, who is slowing down our development? (...) The Student Union should fight against the false understanding of socialism as a frictionless society, against this bastard theory that, on the basis of the international character of the working class, negates its national character; against the attitudes that reject the market and monetary exchange of goods (...) Thus, however, does not mean any autonomy or syndicalism as the interests of students are no different than the interests of the working class and of the entire society (The inaugural speech of the newly-elected president of the Zagreb Student Union, Dražen Budiša, in Kesar, Bilbija, and Stefanović 1990, 661).

Although safely “sandwiched” between avowals of loyalty to the positions of the League of Communists of Croatia and identification with the interests of the working class, the ideological makeup of the Croatian student protest diverged significantly from that in Belgrade. First

of all, the students admitted the role of conflicts in socialism, which would have been considered almost a blasphemy. They suggested that these conflicts are emanating from the suppression of the “national” element in the struggle of the working class, while, on the other hand, they affirmed the market economy, which the Praxis philosophers had fervently criticized. The Croatian student movement shared the nationalist sentiment of the protest in Prishtina (indeed, as Rusinow noted, students from Kosovo studying in Zagreb played a relatively significant role in the developments; cf. Rusinow 2008, 169), but it went beyond claims related to particular linguistic or ethnic identities, into the critique of the structure and principles of distribution within the federation.

This is a very important difference, especially as it continued to play a role in the political mobilizations of students in Kosovo and Croatia. Whereas protests in Kosovo mainly addressed the educational and linguistic rights of *Kosovo Albanians* and the political position of *Kosovo* as such—within or outside of the federation—Croatian protests came to question the distribution of power between all constituent republics, and thus the make-up of the federation itself. In itself, this difference can be attributed to the fact that a large portion of federal aid—exactly what the Croatian movement was criticizing—was going to Kosovo. Thus, although the movements in Croatia and in Kosovo had some ideological similarities, their political goals, in fact, were quite different.

Irvine also argues that the key drivers of the Croatian Spring cannot be found either in the economic grievances or in the nationalist tendencies, but rather in the questioning of the structure of the federation: “(...) Croatian communists’ promotion of political reforms (...) was neither merely a response to short-term developments nor an outburst of pent-up national resentment; it was, rather, also a resumption of the struggle over different views of the federal order and the distribution of power among the national groups it signified (...) The clash over competing concepts of the federal order, inherited from the Partisan period, was a defining feature of the Croatian Spring and the period of reform leading up to it” (Irvine 2008, 152–53).

The student movement in Croatia ended at the peak of the crisis, just as it appeared to be gathering momentum. During the summer of 1971, the atmosphere remained dynamic and tense: the Croatian

students' union entered into conflict with other student unions in Yugoslavia. On November 22, 1971, the Croatian university movement announced that the University of Zagreb would be going on strike until a new foreign currency regime was installed. The issue of foreign currency was one of the most sensitive points related to redistribution between republics in the Yugoslav federation; massive revenues from tourism made Croatia the biggest attractor of foreign currency in Yugoslavia, but the closed foreign currency market forced it to trade these revenues with other republics at a rate that was not particularly favorable. Thus, the students now openly departed from an education-oriented agenda and became directly involved in matters pertaining to the structure of the federation, leading some Croatian media to qualify the protest as anti-constitutional (Kesar, Bilbija, and Stefanović 1990, 807).

On November 24, students decided to extend the strike to other universities in Croatia. Teaching activities at universities had come to a complete halt: within days, an estimated 30,000 Croatian students were on strike (Rusinow 2008, 219–20; Ramet 1992a, 129). The response of the leadership of the League of Communists in Croatia, however, was rather mixed. While stating that they agreed with the problems related to the foreign currency regime, they sharply criticized the strike action. Different authors speculate whether this was a genuine disapproval or awareness of the impending “showdown” (cf. Ramet 1992a, 129; Rusinow 2008, 220–21). Although other media and leaders showed support to the students, the decision was finally reached to stop the strike by December 3. Of course, as Rusinow had put it, by that date it had ceased to matter (2008, 221): Tito had convened a meeting in Karadjordjevo that would put the end to Croatian Spring.

On December 1, 1971, the Croatian LCC leadership was been summoned to Tito's hunting lodge in Karadjordjevo, to a joint session of the presidiums of LCC and LCY. They were scolded and told straightforwardly that their politics were now substantially departing from the party line, for which they would have to bear consequences. Interestingly, none of them were dismissed on the spot; this would have represented a serious violation of Party rules and order. Instead, they were told to “deal” with the problems in their republic, starting with the nationalist movement headed by Matica Hrvatska which, it was felt, was getting “out of control.” On the afternoon of December 2,

Tito came on the national radio to read the statement that made public the conclusions reached in the two meetings—with the LCC and of the LCY. After a couple of days, necessary in order to create the illusion of a “popular demand” for their withdrawal, the LCC “triumvirate”—Dabčević-Kučar, Tripalo, and Pirker—officially resigned from their positions (Rusinow 2008, 106). Students at the University of Zagreb, who were planning public protests against this decision, were arrested. The “mass movement” was curbed, and the purges began.

2.4. From Spring to Fall

Authors analyzing the aftermath of the Croatian Spring have been more or less unanimous in qualifying it as the largest and most comprehensive purge of the Yugoslav communists to date. Rusinow writes:

By mid-January [1972], at least three hundred resignations or dismissals of party or state officials at all levels have been reported in the press, and the total list was undoubtedly much larger. Spasmodic arrests on charges ranging from “hostile propaganda” to conspiring to overthrow the constitution or the socialist system continued throughout the spring (...) A few minor figures, again often students, have been tried and sentenced (...) Five months after the process began, the majority of the Croats, second most numerous and important of Yugoslavia’s nationalities, were still in a state of shock, bitterly resentful, unwilling to believe the “truths” they were told about the genuinely popular leaders they had lost. (Rusinow 2008, 106–07)

Ramet recalls the scope of the backlash:

In the aftermath of the crisis, literally tens of thousands of members were expelled from the party, most for failure to toe the party line (...) altogether two to three thousand persons were imprisoned for political reasons in Croatia in the wake of the fall of Tripalo and Dabčević-Kučar; thousands more were held administratively (without formal charges) for two to three months (...) Wayward student publications in other republics

were also “cleansed”: the editors of *Student* (Serbia), *Bota e Re* (Kosovo), and a Macedonian student paper were replaced, and the editor of the Ljubljana student paper, *Tribuna*, was reprimanded (...) The backlash continued through 1973, reaching a climax in October and November with the continued purge of writers, filmmakers, university professors, and former liberal leaders. (Ramet 1992a, 131)

The purges created a repressed, “sullen” nationalism in Croatia, which would only regain confidence with the sharpening of the crisis in Yugoslavia at the end of the 1980s, after Franjo Tuđman, one of the intellectuals tried and convicted in the Karadjordjevo aftermath, was elected as President and the road was clear to secession and the ensuing conflict in Yugoslavia (cf. Irvine, 2008, 168). Indeed, the Croatian Spring and the related crises in Yugoslavia are often seen as the precursors to the breakup. Most scholars seem to agree that the purges that followed the Karadjordjevo meeting resulted in the removal from politics of a substantial number of young, agile, and fresh cadres, who were replaced by older, inflexible apparatchiks whose only asset was that they were loyal to the Central Committee of the LCY. Irvine summarizes these arguments:

In what sense was the Croatian Spring the beginning of the end of Yugoslavia? The usual answer to this question has been that the Croatian Spring resulted in the removal of the most energetic, capable leaders in Yugoslavia. In the case of Serbia, they were also leaders most resistant to the forces of nationalism. Their removal and replacement by mediocre obedient leaders who lacked legitimacy robbed Yugoslavia of the good leadership it desperately needed to solve the pressing economic and political problems that had contributed to the Croatian Spring in the first place. Good leadership was especially important after Tito's death, when there was no longer an ultimate arbiter to resolve conflicts among national groups and prevent paralysis of the political system. Instead, the second- or third-rate leaders put in place by Tito himself were left to steer the country through the extraordinarily difficult period after his departure from the scene in 1980. (Irvine 2008, 168–69)

As noted, the purges were not limited to Croatia or to the Croatian League of Communists. Besides the Praxis Marxists, they included—or, at least, targeted—every single person or ideological stream that appeared to represent a challenge to the established order. Denitch writes:

Despite the claims to the contrary by Croatian nationalist publicists, Tito's crackdown in 1972 was by no means limited to the Croats who were flirting with nationalism and liberalism. Tito, always in search of a repressive "symmetry" in the treatment of the potentially contentious leaderships of various Yugoslav republics, also cracked down and removed the very popular liberal reformist communist leaders of Serbia, Slovenia, and Macedonia. That effectively removed the brightest and the best of the young postrevolutionary generation of Yugoslav leaders, a group that had a history of working together and were, at least at the time, almost immune to nationalist intolerance towards each other (...) They probably represented the last leadership that could have assured an orderly and democratic transition to democracy. (Denitch 1994, 55–56)

The role that the deposed politicians could have played in the development of Yugoslavia will always remain on the level of speculation. It is certain that, besides or independently of the role of leaders in the decades leading to Yugoslavia's breakup, a number of structural factors inevitably contributed to this outcome (cf. Irvine 2008, 169). Although some of these factors significantly pre-date the crises described above, some of them were substantially reinforced, and perhaps—at least partially—created by the responses to the protests. To begin with, the purges created an atmosphere of terrifying silence in which any opinion that diverged (or threatened to diverge) from the strict party line was forbidden and punished. As opposed to the relatively open and liberal atmosphere that preceded the protests, the period after 1972 can be seen as one in which Yugoslavia was transformed into a near-totalitarian state, before it dissolved. Denitch writes:

One thing, however, did remain irreducible and unnegotiable, both in practice and theory, until the end and the collapse of

the League [of Communists] as a Yugoslav-wide organization in 1988. That was the league's unwillingness to compete in anything resembling free elections or even, for that matter, to compete ideologically against any organized group that would politically or ideologically counterpoise itself to the communists. It would, further, not tolerate competition from a group that accepted most of the postulates of Yugoslav politics. It did not really matter whether the group was nationalist, liberal-democratic, or even (albeit critically) Marxist. The last type of group was most threatening. The 1971 crackdown against nationalism and liberalism was conducted in the name of the unity of the LCY and its continued monopoly on effective power." (Denitch 1994, 57–58)

This represents the gist of the regime's reactions to the movements between 1968 and 1974. In the atmosphere of a staggering economy and growing unemployment, any dissent coming from within—especially if it aspired to challenge the principles of economic distribution within the federation, as the Croatian Spring did, or, even worse, the very idea of market economy, as some of the Praxis Marxists did—was seen as a potential threat to the power of the League. Although, from the point of view of political philosophy, it may appear curious that the regime approached the “extermination” of both nationalists and Marxists with equal zeal, in the Yugoslav political context it actually made perfect sense: despite their inner differences and contradictions, these movements threatened to subvert the existing order.

In this context, the overall transformation of education that took place between 1971 and 1975 can be understood as the attempt of the regime to stifle social movements that had the potential to challenge the status quo. Purges of critically-minded professors, censorship or banning of student newspapers and prosecution of student leaders were one part of the solution that aimed to ensure dissenting voices would be kept “in check.” The other part of the solution was to provide routes to quick and stable employment; this is why VOE reform focused on short cycles, applicable skills, and stimulated school-to-work transition. The third part was to ensure that inculcation into the “proper” form of Marxism would happen early enough, so that even those who went to university would be immune to

influence of the “wrong” interpretations of Marxism—essentially, those that may depart from the League lines. The insistence on “Marxist upbringing” in the documents that described and characterized the VOE reform can then be understood from this perspective. It wasn’t Marxism as general political philosophy that the regime wanted to see more strongly represented in the curriculum: it was the “correct” form of Marxism as the ideology and interpretation of reality, as opposed to the supposedly “dangerous” interpretations championed, among others, by the Praxis philosophers, that was supposed to “take root” in the minds of school students.

However, rather than just stifling critical dissent and introducing an ideologically uniform curriculum, the reforms introduced in reaction to the protests had more important consequences. For instance, one of the things in which the reactions were exceptional was how they had treated the ethnic Albanian mobilization in 1968. Although the protesters were repressed with not less brutality than in other parts of Yugoslavia, their demands were treated differently—in effect, they resulted in the opening of an independent university in Prishtina (though not, as we could see, in a corresponding effort to integrate it into the overall Yugoslav intellectual climate). This hints at an important precedent, which will later be reflected in the way Slobodan Milošević approached the dissolution of Yugoslavia: even nationalist political claims were more acceptable than those that questioned the structure of the federation and the supreme power of the League. Thus, the regime was willing to respond to the requests of Albanian Kosovars as long as they did not include secession or the status of republic for the province; consequences or outcomes for educational or social integration in the long term were, at the time, seen as far less relevant than the preservation of the status quo.

In effect, what the reactions to the protests managed to do was to establish ethnic nationalism as a legitimate rallying point, while suppressing all other avenues for expression of political differences. The Constitution of 1974, which was largely drafted as a response to crisis in the federation, effectively embodied this principle. This was the cost of responding to the needs and conflicts that surfaced during the crises: economic and political decentralization—willingly or not—opened the door for nationalist mobilization as the primary expression of political sentiments. Denitch writes:

The economic and political settlement enshrined in the constitution of 1974 had almost completely solved the original economic and political grievances against supposed excessive centralism, control on the part of Belgrade, and domination of Serbia within the federation (...) The constitution of 1974 practically gave each republic and province a veto over any legislation that might affect it negatively. The result was an almost complete paralysis of the federal system when economic and political crises arose during the 1980s (...) Most foreign experts have also argued that Yugoslavia was far too decentralized by the 1974 constitution, making difficult economic and political decisions all but impossible to make, at least legally. (Denitch 1994, 104–05)

Furthermore, he traces this process to the very conflict during the breakup of Yugoslavia:

Thus a causal link began to unfold. The choice of decentralization rather than democratization in the early 1970s was at the root of the process. Albanian self-assertion in the Province of Kosovo led to Milosevic's awakening of the Serbian nationalist populist genie in the mid-1980s. The fear-ridden reaction of the leaders of the other republics to Serbian bullying tactics had encouraged the reactive growth of varying nationalisms in Slovenia, Croatia, and even among the Bosnian Muslims and in Macedonia. This in turn provoked predictable fears of the minorities about the increasing nationalism of the major national groups in their own republics. There were no instruments at the federal center that could have effectively mediated between the republics. The fat was well and truly in the fire. (1994, 61)

Whether the Constitution of 1974 was really the factor that decisively tipped Yugoslavia in the direction of violent disintegration, of course, will remain an open question. Dimitrijević (2000, 399) writes it had earned such a bad reputation, even among those who have never read it, that “it is not surprising that no one claims to have been its author.” He also emphasizes that the 1974 Constitution cannot be viewed in isolation from the political challenges in the 1960s, nor from the (already mentioned) amendments in 1971. However, it certainly did

two things: on the one hand, it complicated collective decision making to the point at which became effectively impossible: "After another series of empty public debates the new constitution was promulgated on February 21, 1974. It was an unusual, enormously long (406 articles), verbose and confused text, leaving the reader with the inescapable impression that its purpose was rather to hide than to reveal (...) Mystification was intensified by the new jargon which was difficult to comprehend in the original Yugoslav versions, and almost impossible to translate. The old dogmatic communist tendency to rename in order to change here reached new heights" (403). On the other hand, it established republican (which quickly became conflated with ethnic or national) representation as the most likely and legitimate venue for the expression of political interests and the construction of political identities:

The principal message was that, in spite of class oratory, the federal state was based on national arrangement, where even nations not originally considered to be the "titular nations" of Yugoslavia came to play a full role. The Slavic Moslems, principally inhabiting Bosnia-Herzegovina, had been promoted into a fully fledged Yugoslav people under a religious name in 1971, which was not only a misnomer for the non-religious majority among them, but proved later to have dreadful consequences. Others, like the most numerous Albanians and Hungarians, obtained a better status under another new euphemism for national minorities, *narodnost*, meaningless in Serbo-Croat and poorly translated into English as "nationality" (...) the republics were referred to as states, based on the "sovereignty of the people" and "...communities of the working people and citizens, and of nations and nationalities having equal rights." This was a clear indication of a drift to a confederate structure of the Yugoslav federation. (Dimitrijević 2000, 405–06)

However, confederalism did not provide for more democracy or flexibility in decision- and policymaking. The "consociational" arrangements in Yugoslavia were never formalized, and after the demise of the Party there were no institutional mechanisms to establish real democratic consociationalism (cf. Schoepflin 1993, 192). The only thing the

1974 reform of the federation managed to do was to effectively provide a framework conducive to the subsequent dissolution.

2.5. Vocation-Oriented Education Reform: Solution or Palliative Education?

The reform of education that happened in the context of the introduction of the 1974 Constitution must be understood in the broader context of the political reforms initiated during the first half of the 1970s. Their purpose was to “save” the federation by addressing the conflicts and tensions expressed in the social movements between 1968 and 1971, while simultaneously striving to maintain the communist power base—both in the vague sense in which the working class was seen as the foundation of the regime, and in the sense of countering the challenges to the bureaucratic apparatus of the state. The repressive measures (purges of the “ideologically unfit” at universities and among the ranks of the League of Communists), as well as administrative and legal reforms (the decentralization of decision-making in the federation and its embodiment in the 1974 Constitution) were intended to directly address the manifestations of the tensions in the Yugoslav Federation. Educational reform, on the other hand, can be seen as a more pro-active, long-term measure: it did not only address the consequences of the crisis that were manifested in the student protests, but also aimed at treating the causes and preventing future upsurges of discontent.

One part of these measures was relatively straightforward. Removing the “problematic” Praxis philosophers from their posts in Serbian and Croatian academia, and then purging the rebellious leaderships of the republican branches of the League of Communists, meant that the students (and the broader public) would be left without both “sources of inspiration” for the critique of society, and without politicians to potentially rally behind in case of broader political, including nationalist, mobilization. Closing down the branches of the League of Communists at “problematic” university departments and faculties, and prosecuting student leaders, also meant that the university was to become increasingly depoliticized, with student organizing again separated from the world of serious (or “real”) politics and

reserved for the loyal party cadres. Increased censorship of publishing and writing that also happened at the time assured that there would be little interruptions of the silence about these matters, in universities or outside them.

The development and implementation of vocation-oriented education, on the other hand, tried to address the longer-term, deeper and structural causes of the unrests. Its emphasis on vocational education and training aimed at tackling the endemic unemployment, which had become one of the main sources of discontent, especially among university graduates and first-time entrants into the labor market. The vocation-oriented programs and degrees in secondary education were intended to provide secondary education graduates with skills and incentives to go directly into labor, instead of into higher education where they, as suggested in the reform documents, were getting largely inapplicable skills. The creators of the education reform thought that unemployment was the chief trigger of discontent; providing employment—any sort of employment—was accordingly seen as a remedy for the objective sources of this discontent. This intention was also behind the narrative of the “revalorization” of productive work: more incentives for early labor market insertion were expected to reduce the attractiveness of university education for secondary school graduates, and thus make sure more of them steer clear of these sites of reproduction of social discontent. Structural measures, such as the abolishment of the general, gymnasium-type secondary education, which until that time represented the main path to university education, were introduced to support and further stimulate the orientation of students towards “productive” professions.

Of course, attempts to reduce the attractiveness of university education did not have to do only with (un)employment prospects. The heritage of the 1968–71 was strongly reflected in the discourse of the education reform that increasingly identified all universities as, firstly, sites of social reproduction and, secondly, sites of dissent and what the regime termed “anti-social” discourses (regardless of whether they could be identified with liberalism, nationalism, forms of Marxism etc.). The first “accusation” was not entirely untrue, though the extent to which it applied was largely a matter of perception. Due to rapid massification and affirmative action measures explicitly aimed at stimulating those from peasant or worker backgrounds to enter university,

the structure of the student population in the latter part of the 1960s did manage to shift from a highly exclusive, elitist one dominant before WWII, to a community that was slightly more diverse (if still dominated by the descendants of the white-collar workers). Thus, whether university education was really (and substantially) reproducing social inequalities is a matter of some debate; if it were indeed the key problem, it would have likely resulted in more measures aimed at the integration of otherwise excluded or marginalized groups into higher education, such as scholarships, subsidies etc. But education reform did not entail any of these. The problem with social reproduction, thus, has to be seen in conjunction with the latter “accusation,” that of university education being responsible for the “seduction” of youth into false, “anti-social” values. This meant that anybody who went to university was potentially at danger of becoming a dissenter from the official credo of the LCY—even if they came from the “good,” working or peasant classes: indeed, many of the student leaders in the protests came from rather modest backgrounds.

What the system faced, in fact, was a paradox. University, the very institution that should have been contributing to social development and progress—especially of the working class—was not only reproducing social inequalities but also sowing the seeds of discontent among its students and the broader population. The architects of the education system could not accept the possibility that the working people, whose interests the party was supposed to represent, could themselves be against the political decisions of the League of Communists. The only way that they could explain the criticism of the official policies of the LCY expressed in the protests was that students were being “misled” by someone else, equally assuming the guise of an “internal enemy” and “foreign agent.” The intellectuals seemed like obvious culprits. This explains why Tito equated the former chief of the secret police Ranković with the Praxis Marxist philosophers from the University of Belgrade (the two groups could not have been further apart politically): all of them were the enemies of the state, because they were challenging the prevailing dogma.

The role of intelligentsia in communism is, of course, a much more complex topic (cf. Konrád and Szelényi 1979). What is important here, however, is the logical link that was established between universities as sites for the generation of discontent in intellectuals/

professors and students, and social reproduction: “Homo faber and homo sapiens are socially separated, alienated, opposed in the existence of different classes; and the primary purpose of education is to perpetuate these divisions (...) it has, in fact, been developed as a specific ritual which selects a small proportion of the population for the social elites, and places them on a pedestal which is inaccessible for the vast majority of the population” (Šuvar 1977, 89). It is almost certain that Šuvar drew some cues from Gramsci’s ideas on the general “distribution” of intellect (Gramsci 1999 [1971], 140), and thus the possibility of the development of “organic” intelligentsia. In this sense, ensuring that children of worker or peasant origin can enter university seemed like a reasonable step in the development of an intellectual stratum loyal to the working class.

However, what appears peculiar is that the reform did not stop here: it actually attempted to *reverse* social inequalities by, simultaneously, “elevating” the productive professions that made up the working class, and “devaluating” the intellectual social stratum whose appeal, it was argued, was the reason why most people went into (higher) education. Thus, the objective of the reform was not stopping class reproduction at university, nor stopping the reproduction of social inequalities. It was literally supposed to transform intellectuals into the working class: “[t]he class function of education in our society, then, should be expressed in it being used not to flee from the basic productive [workers] class, but to remain in it (...) Because, the goal of the socialist reform of education could be summarized as—abolishing the intelligentsia!” (Šuvar 1977, 93, 97).

2.6. Conclusions

The vocational education reform of the Yugoslav federation in 1974 was not exclusively directed at generating employment or boosting the economy. Its primary driver was ideological rather than economic: what was at stake was the redefinition of the very concept of education and the promotion of productive labor, both as a value in itself, and in opposition to “pure” intellectual inquiry. The idea was not so much to allow for a quicker transition from education to work, as to keep young people occupied and properly instructed in technical and

vocational skills, all the while making sure their only ideological education was wrapped in the previously approved form of Marxism. The objective was to strip the universities, which were seen as centers of social discontent, of the critical power to challenge the existing order, and to transform them instead into institutions for the education of the (small) numbers of those who could afford to engage in non-productive labor.

The success and impact of the education reform should, in turn, also be judged from this perspective. Although it has already been pointed out that the reform failed to convince young people that going into work is a better option than going into the university, its performance was substantially different when it came to political goals. Namely, the reform—in combination with other repressive measures, including “purges” at the University of Belgrade—did manage to effectively depoliticize the universities and stifle expressions of student discontent for quite a long time. Although in Slovenia new rounds of protests started in 1981, in Serbia they took place only in 1991/2, in response to the regime’s growing militarization and the exacerbation of the conflict in former Yugoslavia. Another four years passed until a massive mobilization of students would happen after the disputed elections in 1996/97. The repressive Universities Act adopted in Serbia in 1998 set motion to another wave of protests, and their final culmination came with the toppling of the Milošević regime in Belgrade in 2000—twenty-five years after the introduction of the education reform.

However, the most important (and, very likely, unintended) consequence of the educational reform was that it fixed once and for all the same principle embodied in the 1974 Constitution: the “containment” of social and political life within the constituent units of the federation. Vocationalization of education meant that secondary schools were tied to the enterprises and factories that were in their geographical proximity, and thus the exchange between education and labor was happening in increasingly atomized units. In practice, this meant that pupils and students went to school in the places where they grew up, and most likely ended up working—or at least looking for a job—in the same place where they attended school. Those that went to university also chose the universities in the same republic, and most proximate to them; this also meant that they were likely to work—or, again,

look for employment—in the same republic and region they came from. As a consequence, the qualified workforce was becoming less and less mobile within the federation. The only mobile workers at the time were either low- or unqualified *gästarbeiter* who, trying to avoid unemployment, sought work in the West (primarily in Germany and Austria), and workers of the same profile temporarily employed in Slovenia, the Yugoslav “West.”³ People still traveled for holidays; but the closer integration of education and labor units also meant that they were increasingly unlikely to travel either for education or for work. This was not only the case with the middle classes, but also with political elites:

Following the more routinized path of education, career, and political service, the second-generation leaders tend to develop within the framework of republics and localities rather than within a statewide arena...The problem is further accentuated by the absence of statewide educational institutions, which means that the development of the new intelligentsia takes place primarily within the individual republics. The effect of decentralization in this respect is to reinforce the localist rather than the universal character of the new leadership since political careers are also generally limited by the frontiers of a single republic. The experiences of other multinational polities point out the serious problem posed by the development of a fragmented state leadership within a society where power aggregation tends to take place increasingly on geographic lines. (Denitch 1976, 20–21)

As can be discerned from the developments leading up to the breakup of former Yugoslavia, the geographic or republican lines soon became equated with the ethnic: it was not the welfare of citizens of Croatia but of Croatians that was at stake, and not the welfare of the citizens of Serbia but that of Serbs: “As the system continued to decay—that is, as the original ideological cement holding the party cadres together

³ Primarily of Bosnian, Montenegrin, or Serbian origin, these workers and their families were in great numbers “erased” from the list of residents after Slovenia declared independence; the act continues to generate controversy in the otherwise relatively ethnically homogenous Slovenia.

continued to crumble—the leaders of the republics increasingly began to present the interests of their power base, their own republics, against the center. This was a sure road to local popularity. As time went on leaders of the LCY in the republics, particularly after Tito's death in 1980, even more directly and openly represented the desires and interests of their own republics. A symbiosis of communist and localist nationalist politics thus evolved" (Denitch 1994, 59–60). The fragmentation of political expression became only the pretext for the repression of the dominant ethnic group over minorities or, in cases where a clear ethnic majority did not exist—as in Bosnia—for the ethnic cleansing which strove to achieve both the political and biological dominance of one ethnic group. What could safely be said in conclusion is that vocational education contributed to the further "atomization" of republics, and thus to the equalization of territorial and ethnic identities.

However, reinforcing ethnic cleavages was not the only unintended consequence of the education reform. Its ideological rigidity and staunch anti-intellectualism actually provided an ideal setting for the conservative "backlash" that took place during the process of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and, in some cases, continued in its aftermath. It comes as no surprise, then, that in many cases it was the dissident intellectuals who carried the torches of nationalist "flame" during the processes of dissolution. Their opposition to the communist regime justified their ideas and political actions during its demise. Those intellectuals who weren't on the nationalist side equally found their political legitimization through the opposition to the remains of the regime: this gave rise to the "antinationalist" movements in Serbia and Croatia (Jansen 2005).

The following chapter will deal with the ways in which these dynamics interacted with education policies after the end of the conflict. It will focus on the introduction of religious and civic education in Serbia after the regime change that took place in 2000. Through the analysis of this case, it will attempt to show how the political categories and identities that were in the focus of the vocation-oriented education reform in second half of the twentieth century found novel forms of expression in the education policies of the twenty-first.

CHAPTER 3

Religious Education or Civic EUcation? Education Policy and Transition in Post-Milošević Serbia

Introduction

Reforms implemented during the 1970s and 1980s did not succeed in preventing the breakup of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. By the end of the 1980s, political fragmentation, combined with nationalist mobilization, resulted in the conflict that changed the face of the region forever. Education followed the trajectory of other public policies of the time: from the focus on employment and the containment of social unrest that characterized the vocation-oriented education reform in the 1970s and the early 1980s, it evolved to support the processes of ethnic mobilization and consolidation of the new nation-states that emerged from the conflict.

The dissolution of former Yugoslavia prompted a multitude of analyses that attempt to reconstruct the causes and consequences of this process. Today, these amount to a veritable “genre” of their own, attributing different weight to factors ranging from economic crisis to “ancient ethnic hatreds” mentioned in the Introduction to this book (cf. Dragovic-Soso 2007). Despite differences, the point in which the majority of analyses seem to converge is in attributing the main responsibility for the beginning of the conflict to the expansionist politics of Serbia and its leader, Slobodan Milošević. For instance, Tismaneanu writes: “The paradigmatic ‘worst case scenario’ in Eastern Europe, the exemplum of the shattering of all democratic values under ethnocratic

pressure, has obviously been Yugoslavia. In the former federation, we witnessed the ‘Belgrade syndrome’: a form of populism instrumented through militaristic and expansionist policies and demagogic nationalism. Its purpose was to preserve the political domination of the ex-communist, radically nationalist elite grouped around Slobodan Milošević. The ruling party, the secret police and the army were the pillars upon which Milošević built his personalist, ethnocentric authoritarianism” (Tismaneanu 2012, 22–23).

Milošević had risen to power by defeating the more centralist, integrative options within the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, and established his power base through a “tougher” stance on nationalist mobilization in Kosovo and identification with the interests of the Serb minority in a series of, now iconic, public statements.¹ His government, though not always openly, supported the rebellion of the Serbs after Croatia declared independence, and the establishment of the Republic of Srpska Krajina. It cooperated with (and, at least a certain point in time, indirectly controlled) the army of Bosnian Serbs as they began the siege of Sarajevo and proceeded to ethnically cleanse the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the 1995 Dayton peace conference, Milošević was hailed as the “guarantor of peace and stability in the Balkans,” as, together with the leaders of Croatia and Bosnia, they agreed on the division of Bosnia. However, the Dayton Peace Agreement did not put a stop to the violence in former Yugoslavia; atrocities in Kosovo continued, finally resulting in the NATO intervention in the spring of 1999. Thus, it was not surprising that the international community identified Milošević as the main obstacle to full democratization and the establishment of a durable peace in the region.

Throughout the 1990s, there had been several attempts to remove Milošević from power. In Serbia, his policies grew steadily less popular, especially as the country began to pay the economic and political price of the war (cf. Bieber 2011; Ramet 1992). In 1991 and 1992, there

¹ These include “No one should dare beat you” but also, for instance, a more elaborate “We shall win the battle for Kosovo regardless of the obstacles facing us inside and outside the country (...) We shall win despite the fact that Serbia’s enemies outside the country are plotting against it, along with those in the country.” (Ramet 1992b, 83).

were mass popular and student protests against repressive internal policies and Serbia's pending involvement in the conflict (Kuzmanović et al. 1993; Popadić 1999; Prošić-Dvornić 1993). In 1996 and 1997, prompted by alleged electoral fraud, the longest anti-regime protests in the country's history took place (e.g., Lazić 1999; Prošić-Dvornić 1998). However, the success of these initiatives remained limited; the political opposition to Milošević was divided along ideological and social lines, while civic initiatives managed to mobilize a part of the population, but not sufficient for Milošević or his party to actually lose their power base. The NATO intervention in 1999 sped things up, by managing to put additional pressure on the economy, and in 2000, the momentum that enabled the overthrow of the regime was finally reached. The actual event took place on October 5, 2000, when a massive demonstration of opposition supporters had been scheduled in reaction to disputed results of presidential elections. People from all corners of Serbia converged towards Belgrade. According to a number of sources, there was already an agreement between representatives of the opposition and the police and army forces; in all cases, the latter did not intervene when the protesters stormed the building of the Parliament, thus symbolically "appropriating" state power (Bujošević and Radovanović 2003). Later, Milošević appeared on television to declare that he had lost the elections to Vojislav Koštunica, who became President of Yugoslavia. Within a couple of days, the country was fully controlled by the opposition: a transitional government was established, and early parliamentary elections called for December 2000. The results of the elections confirmed the overthrow, bringing into power a coalition of former opposition parties and Zoran Đinđić, a pro-European liberal, as prime minister.

The international community warmly endorsed the regime change, which was taken to not only signify the end of the Yugoslav crisis, but also the end of communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe. The new ruling coalition professed its democratic and pro-European orientation, focusing on reintegrating Serbia into international institutions from which it had become increasingly isolated during the 1990s. The political rhetoric in Serbia at the time resembles that which followed regime changes in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe: it emphasized the (long-awaited) "return to Europe" and reintegration into the "European community

of nations,” reflecting the broader trend of constructing post-communist transitions as the resurgence of projects of modernity (cf. Soltan 2012; Vidmar-Horvat and Delanty 2008). The International Crisis Group (ICG) described the regime change in the following words: “The October 2000 democratic uprising in Serbia gave the world new hope that the horror, chaos and misery that devastated the Balkans—through a decade of four wars, and of murder, atrocity and economic destruction on a massive scale—were finally at an end” (ICG 2001, ix).

The period after the regime change in Serbia, in this sense, clearly qualifies as a critical juncture (Collier and Collier 2002). Not only did it mark the symbolic end of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, but it also opened a number of questions related to the political future of the region. Similarly to the “triple challenge” (political pluralism, market economy, and the civil society) in other former communist countries, these questions touched upon the design of institutions, the role of markets, development of political participation, as well as the issue of dealing with the past (cf. Tismaneanu 2012; Offe 2004). However, the position of Serbia was somewhat different than that of most other countries in the region. A “latecomer” to the transition process, it was expected to do a lot of “catching up” in a short period of time. A multitude of international organizations, from the European Union to the IMF, the World Bank and the OECD, lined up to “steer” the country through this process, as well as to ensure that there would be no resurgence of the political agenda that led to the wars in former Yugoslavia. In this context, arguably the most controversial aspect of the transition in Serbia’s transition was coming to terms with the legacy of the previous regime.

Dealing with the communist past was a problematic enough issue as such (e.g., Stan 2012; McAdams 2012). In Serbia, however, it entailed dealing with not only the legacy of the communist regime, but also the more problematic legacy of Milošević as its successor, which meant facing the responsibility for war crimes and genocide committed during the Yugoslav conflict (cf. Dimitrijevic 2011; Subotic 2009). In a society where at different times roughly half the population supported the regime, this was bound to create tensions. In a broader sense, “dealing with the past” also included the questions of the sources of the breakup of Yugoslavia, the role of nationalism, religion,

language, and ethnicity in its dissolution, and the collective or individual responsibility for the social and political processes that followed. This made the framing of issues related to the recent past particularly salient: in other words, the public contestation over issues related to recent history would be the one to most critically define the country's political trajectory (cf. Bieber 2011).

Education had a critical importance in this context. Through institutions and discourses, it was expected to build identities and narratives that would facilitate the economic and cultural transformation of the society from a "backward-looking," divided and nationalist one, to a modern, pro-European, and democratic one. To the new generations, it could offer visions of the future and shared foundations that would depart from the nationalist narratives of superiority and victimhood that dominated educational discourse during the 1990s. In a way, it was to "reeducate" the nation, both metaphorically and literally. In this sense, one particular aspect of the education reform implemented after the fall of Milošević came as more than a slight shock.

Early in 2001, the Ministry of Education announced it would be introducing religious education to elementary and secondary schools in Serbia. Religious education had been absent from the formal schooling system since 1952, when the Law on public schools banned religious instruction within education institutions (Bačević 2005; Dačić 2003). The act immediately caused a stir in the public sphere. There was no prior consensus about it: as a matter of fact, as will be elaborated below, the public in Serbia was rather divided on the issue. Ideologically, it was rather curious, as it entailed the public endorsement of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which was a rather traditional (if not directly anti-modern) institution. In a sense, of course, this policy could have been interpreted as an early step in "restitution," seeking to reverse the legacy of the preceding regime. However, in other domains such as, for instance, the restitution of church property, the process turned out to be much slower and beset by ideological conflicts; rather than a rule, the introduction of religious education came to be more of an exception. The introduction of religious education, at least on the surface of it, appeared to have come "out of the blue," underpinned, if anything, by a dubious ideological rationale. In the rhetorics of the liberal politicians in Serbia, it is still identified as the precedent that

enabled the church to exert influence on the public sphere.² Regardless of the fact that more than ten years have elapsed since its introduction, debates on religious education continue to resurface, while the public remains divided between its supporters and staunch critics. To this day, it remains one of the most controversial decisions of the first post-Milošević government in Serbia.

How are we to understand the introduction of religious education? Was it just a random act of education policymaking that can be attributed to the ideological and political confusion that followed the regime change in Serbia in 2000? This chapter will argue that, as a matter of fact, the introduction of religious education is a perfect lens through which to understand the process of “weaving” identity politics into education policies. The debates it provoked crystallized the ideological and social divisions on the Serbian political scene, linking the legacy of the period before the dissolution of former Yugoslavia with the subsequent political dynamics in the countries in the region. In this context, the introduction of religious education can be interpreted as something Marcel Mauss dubbed a “total social fact”: a “snapshot” of the society with all its intricate elements. It reveals different aspects—legal, economic, religious—and enables the understanding of the ways in which they interact: “These phenomena are at once legal, economic, religious, aesthetic, morphological, and so on. They are legal in that they concern individual and collective rights, organized and diffuse morality; they may be entirely obligatory, or subject simply to praise or disapproval. They are at once political and domestic, being of interest both to classes and to clans and families. They are religious; they concern true religion, animism, magic and diffuse religious mentality” (Mauss 1966, 76). Thus, not only that the establishment of religious education contributed to the structuring of communities and political agency in the sensitive period of social transition, it also established a pattern of policy recognition of specific forms of political subjectivities and their integration into the public sphere.

² E-novine. 02/24/2012. “Aleksandar Jovanović: Uvođenje veronauke je bilo velika greška. [Introducing religious education was a mistake]” <http://www.e-novine.com/drustvo/59680-Uvoenje-veronauke-bila-velika-greka.html> (accessed on 02/16/2013).

Of course, Serbia is not the only former Yugoslav republic that introduced religious education. Only Slovenia, Montenegro and Kosovo have so far resisted the initiatives to introduce religious education in public schools. Probably the most famous case is that of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where religious education was introduced soon after the first multiparty elections following the Dayton Agreement. Although the international community strongly opposed the initiative, given its potential to further stretch the fraught ethnic relationships between the entities, the subject was introduced anyway—naturally, with separate classes for children of different ethnic groups: Islamic religious education for Muslims, Roman Catholic for Croats, Serbian Orthodox for Serbs. In 2011, when Emir Suljagić, then the Minister for Education and Science of the Sarajevo Canton, proposed to remove religious education from the subjects contributing to pupils' G.P.A., it provoked a scandal, with the representatives of religious communities strongly opposing what they interpreted as the attempt to "abandon children to non-believers, thus rendering them incapable to defend themselves from the next round of ethnic cleansing."³ Thus, religious education was seen as closely related to the building of ethnic identity, which was identified with personal as well as group survival.

Bosnia, however, is a rather exceptional case, given both the social trauma inflicted by the war, and the ensuing consociational arrangement that was adopted as a solution for the coexistence of the former parties in the conflict. The absence of religious education in the schools of Slovenia, Montenegro, and Kosovo shows that its introduction is, in fact, a policy choice. In other words, the new government in Serbia after the regime change *had a choice* as to whether to introduce religious education in schools or not. In addition, there were a number of ways in which this could have been done: the form in which the subject ended up being introduced was in no way a "natural" or the only option available to decision-makers at the time.

³ Deutsche Welle (DW). 03/27/2012. Veronauka u BiH – plansko regrutovanje? [Religious education in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Planned recruitment?] <http://www.dw.de/veronauka-u-bih-plansko-regrutovanje/a-15839806> (accessed on 02/16/2013).

Thus, the introduction of religious education should not be seen as a “whim” or a random act; it clearly constitutes an element of education policymaking developed in the period after the regime change. For this reason, this chapter will attempt to reconstruct the process of the introduction of religious education to schools in Serbia, and to understand the reasoning behind this decision. In this process, it will aim to identify the underlying assumptions concerning the nature of political identities that underpinned this particular aspect of policymaking, and to show how these related to the broader social and political dynamics and tendencies that were evident already during the communist period, at the time of the introduction of vocation-oriented education analyzed in the preceding chapter.

This chapter will proceed with the detailed description of the introduction of religious education in Serbia, reconstructing first the context that led to this decision, and then the arguments and controversies that surrounded it. The analysis will seek to explain the paradoxical elements in the introduction of religious education, interpreting them as a specific political strategy in the period of transition. The objective of this process is to sketch out the political and ideological dimensions of this particular policy, and thus to place it in the context of the changing subject of education policies, which will reach its climax with the development of “ethnic” higher education analyzed in Chapter Four.

3.1. The State of Transition

The Serbia that the new regime “inherited” from Milošević looked rather bleak. Sustained involvement in the wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and finally in the conflict in Kosovo, combined with the prolonged economic crisis that reached its peak during the 1990s, completely exhausted the country (cf. Brown 2006; Bieber 2003). A huge proportion of the economy had come to a complete halt during the previous decade, sending thousands into unemployment or early retirement. The NATO military intervention in the spring of 1999 further devastated both industry and infrastructure (Brown 2006; Merritt 2006). Whatever was left of the state-controlled enterprises after 2000 was expecting a swift privatization, most

likely generating new unemployment and thus potentially deepening social crisis.

Although foreign relations substantially improved due to the predominantly pro-Western attitude of the new regime, the inside picture was more complex. The ruling coalition had taken power through a violent overthrow and was holding on to it through an alliance of liberal democrats and conservative nationalists whose possibly only common denominator was their prior opposition to the regime of Slobodan Milošević, though not necessarily to its legacy as a whole (LeBor 2003, 314; Bieber 2003, 79; Todosijevic 2008, 9). Public opinion research, both during and after 2000, showed that the political attitudes of the population were varied and often inconsistent; thus, unanimous popular support to any specific kind of policy could not be expected. It was unclear whether the country's transition would take place through a series of abrupt and sharp measures in the style of "shock therapy," which would probably challenge the political support to the new regime, or through a long, consensus-building process with uncertain ends, probably entailing negotiations with the same legacy that the new regime sought to detach itself from (cf. Tismaneanu 2012, 23; Dulić 2011, 27).

Not surprisingly, different approaches to managing transition first became evident in the context of dealing with the past. The international community was rather clear in the message that overcoming the legacy of the conflicts in former Yugoslavia will require the investigation of the responsibility and criminal culpability of the persons involved, starting with Slobodan Milošević (e.g., ICG 2001). In 1999, the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague indicted Milošević for crimes committed against civilians in Kosovo.⁴ After the regime change in October 2000, he remained in a form of self-imposed house arrest, believed to be awaiting the official decision to arrest and extradite him to The Hague. However, there was lack of consensus in the Serbian government in terms of approaching the issue, probably fearing retribution or disobedience from those parts of society and public administration that did not hold dear the idea of

⁴ Indictments for crimes in Bosnia and Croatia were added later in the process.

international prosecution, so the decision kept being delayed. Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić finally signed the order for the arrest of Milošević in March 2001, but it included an explicit commitment that Milošević will not be extradited to “any judicial or other institution outside of the country” (LeBor 2003, 350). Despite this, following a somewhat dramatic arrest in April 2001, Milošević was extradited to the ICTY the same year in June. At the time, the event did generate strong public reactions: one part of the public was accusing the government, and especially Đinđić, of “treason,” but it was made possible because of the combined determination of Đinđić and strong pressure from the international community, and also aided by the discovery of evidence on the involvement of Milošević’s government in committing and, later, trying to cover up crimes against the civilian population in Kosovo.⁵

Despite inner political turmoil there were domains of public policy where there was at least an illusion of ideological and political consensus. Education was one of those domains. Systematically deprived and underfunded for years, the system was in serious need of an overhaul. The curriculum had been designed for a country and a system that no longer existed; textbooks were old, the classrooms and schools had—even in larger cities—fallen into disrepair. Frequent blackouts, lack of heating, mobilization of teachers and students, interruptions during the NATO intervention, political protests, and shortening of classes during the partial strikes of systematically underpaid teachers between 1990 and 2000 had all taken their toll. The political actors that came to power after the regime change in 2000, thus, had a difficult task: not only did they need to almost completely reform the infrastructure, but they also had to design an educational system that would compensate for the deficiencies of the previous years, as well as prepare the future generations for different challenges of the transition.

The early phases of education reform following the regime change made it seem as if the new government had really taken this task to heart, and was trying to make a decisive break with the legacy of the previous regime. The top ranks of the Ministry of Education and Sports constituted after the parliamentary elections in December

⁵ In early summer 2001 first discoveries of the mass graves of Kosovo Albanians in Central Serbia were made.

2000 consisted almost exclusively of individuals who had spoken or acted against the Milošević regime. The minister was Gašo Knežević, professor of law at the University of Belgrade, from which he was (together with a number of other colleagues) suspended following his refusal to obey the controversial University Act from 1998, which significantly threatened the autonomy of university and instituted a great deal of governmental control. Three ministerial aides—Srbijanka Turajlić, Refik Šćecibović and Vigor Majić—were heads of well-known alternative educational institutions. The Secretary of State for Education, Tunde Kovač Cerović, was well known for her work in democratic and civic education and also the wife of a prominent journalist in an oppositional newspaper during the time of Milošević.

The discourse of the education reform sought to signal a clear change in principles, values, and ideas of education policy. The first comprehensive policy document, entitled “Quality education for all,” was drafted by the Ministry of Education and Sports in 2001 (MoES 2002). Its creation was substantially aided and influenced by both the local civil society and international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the OECD. The document announced that the objectives of the reform were to “reorganise the schooling system in accordance with the need to efficiently contribute to the economic revival of the country; modernise or reorganise the schooling system so that it substantially contributes to the democratic development of the country; [and] modernise or reorganise the schooling system so that it substantially contributes to the future European integration of the country” (MoES 2002, 5). The aims of the system were identified as “acquisition of generative and transferable knowledge, thinking skills, informed decision-making procedures, problem-solving skills, and effective communication skills; mastery of life skills and functional literacy for an information-based society; [and] development of values that appreciate democracy and diversity, and respect of human rights as well as the best national traditions” (ibid.). Furthermore, education was deemed “a priority area for the development of Serbia to facilitate its economic recovery, creation of a democratic society and reintegration into the international community” (ibid.).

Thus, the early stages of the education reform were clearly dominated by a language of modernization, which emphasized the role of

education in fostering values conducive to European integration, romantically described as “return” or “reintegration” into the international community. Education was constructed as an instrument that would help the transformation of Serbia from a country that was, presumably, backward-looking, inefficient, conservative, and burdened with the heavy load of the 1990s, into a modern, European, democratic country with a capitalist economy, which recognized democracy, diversity, and human rights as social outcomes and values. In this context, education had a dual role: it was to stimulate economic development (or “recovery”), but also to aid broader social transformation. Education policy, thus, was clearly a transformative practice: not only an object of change, but also the instrument through which to achieve the transformation into the desired type of society.

The first measures introduced within the education reform quite directly followed this general policy orientation. There was a renewed impetus for decentralization: the decision-making powers, which had been (re)centralized during the 1990s, were devolved (again) to municipalities, schools, parents and teachers’ councils. In some instances, universities, schools and governing bodies were reformed or purged of the remains of the centralist control of the former regime. Substantial attention was devoted to teacher training, and the harmonization (“tuning”) of this field with other European countries. The changes were most visible in higher education, primarily in the framework of the prospective joining to the Bologna process. The reform rhetoric strongly emphasized the flexible curriculum and learning paths, and the “transferable knowledge, thinking skills, informed decision-making procedures, problem-solving skills and effective communication skills, life skills [and] values that appreciate democracy and diversity” (MoES 2002, 5). As a departure from what was perceived to be top-down, inefficient, and undemocratic decision-making that characterized the former regime, the new government’s policy-making emphasized rounds of public consultations that aimed to include pupils, students, parents, teachers, and other education professionals, as well as a growing “class” of policy analysts and experts from both local and international organizations (cf. Baćević and Petkovska 2011). Partially, this reflected the fact that many of the new decision-makers had a background in the non-governmental sector, where more dispersed approaches to agenda-setting were common.

To a greater extent, it was perceived as necessary in order to develop consensus among the political and societal actors needed to ensure the smooth implementation of changes.

In the context of such a decisive change of direction in both the content and methods of policymaking, the decision to (re)introduce religious education to primary and secondary schools came as a true shock. Even during the religious revival in the 1990s, despite occasional appeals from the Serbian Orthodox Church to have religious education reinstated within the public education system, education remained secular. However, it was not only this return to a relatively distant past that seemed to be at odds with the otherwise modernizing élan of the reform; rather, it was the combination of the manner in which the policy was introduced, its content, and its ideological implications, that made it so controversial.

3.2. Blitz Policy

When the Deputy Prime Minister Dušan Mihajlović signed the regulation on the introduction of religious education and alternative subject to public schools in Serbia in July 2001, he effectively short-circuited the debates that had been raging on this issue in the Serbian public sphere for months, if not years (e.g., Kuburić and Moe 2006). In the period between November 2000 and July 2001, public opinion in Serbia had crystallized into more-or-less well-defined camps. Although the majority of those involved in the discussions seemed to agree that the curriculum should include some kind of knowledge on religion—which, many felt, had not been properly dealt with in the curriculum since the communist times—there was less consensus on how this should be done. The Serbian Orthodox Church, as the largest and most influential religious institution, backed by other churches, was in favor of the reintroduction of religious education in the same form in which it had existed before WWII: faith-based and taught by priests. Numerous experts and civil society activists opposed this approach, arguing that dividing children according to faith at early stages could negatively affect inter-group relations, not to mention impose religion on those who may not want it (*ibid.*, 119). Human rights organizations objected to the introduction of faith into schools on the grounds

of violating the constitutional separation of church and state (*ibid.*, 118–19), as well as the violation of human rights, including religious freedoms. As an alternative to faith-based religious education, there were proposals for a secular subject, usually referred to as “history of religion” or “religious culture,” which would aim to introduce the main characteristics of all the major religions, instead of focusing on one. There were suggestions that faith-based education should be available as an extracurricular activity, not integrated into the obligatory curriculum. But, in all cases, there was little sign of any sort of a public consensus emerging before the debate was stopped.

Of course, the introduction of religious education was not the first case in which the new government acted in the absence of widespread public consensus. Half a month before this decision, amidst substantially higher political tensions, Prime Minister Đinđić had signed the extradition of Milošević to ICTY. However, the extradition could at least partly be attributed to external pressure; no comparable pressure existed in the case of religious education. If nothing else, international organizations recommended the cautious treatment of religion as a potential source of social divisions. The models from other European countries were as divided as the public opinion on the issue of religious education. In public debates, these models were adopted and adapted in order to support whichever side the argument came from: proponents of faith-based religious education quoted Austria, Germany, and Poland as positive examples, while its opponents mentioned US and France as countries that do not have religious education in public schools (*ibid.*). Despite the tendency to frame or justify aspects of public sector reform at the time as being guided by examples of “best practice” from developed countries in the West, in the case of religious education there was no clear model that could be used as the external validation for the policy.

Religious education was faith-based, which meant that specific religious communities had the right to teach it in schools. However, not all faiths or religions were allowed to do this: seven religious communities, deemed “traditional,” were licensed to conduct religious education in public schools. These were the Serbian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, Reformist Christian Church, the Islamic Community, the Jewish Community, Slovak Evangelical Church, and Evangelical Christian Church. Other religious communities were,

presumably, allowed to conduct religious education outside of school hours. In addition, the availability of religious education in different faiths was based on what was deemed to be sufficient interest, that is, class size; this meant that classes for children who were not Serbian Orthodox were organized only in places where substantial proportions of religious (and, by extension, ethnic) minorities existed.

Simultaneously with religious education, an alternative subject was introduced for those who did not wish to attend classes of religious education. Initially known literally as “alternative subject,” in time the subject became known as civic education. The curricula covered topics related to interpersonal and group relationships, civic rights and obligations, social and political participation and activism, and other skills and values usually associated with participation in a democratic society. In discussions, it was sometimes portrayed as a form of “moral education for atheists,” or, rather, for those who would not be attending religious education. Thus, from the very beginning civic education was designed to be an alternative to religious education—not a complementary subject. This has quite important implications for the understanding of the reasons that motivated their simultaneous introduction.

In the first year of the implementation of the regulation in public schools, attending religious and civic education was optional. This meant that students, or their parents (in elementary schools, parents were asked to choose for their children), could opt for one of these subjects, or neither. Most of them voted for neither: not entirely surprisingly, adding an extra class to the already demanding school week turned out not to be popular. Perhaps as response to this general lack of interest, in the following year (2002/3) a new regulation was introduced, making the choice between religious and civic education mandatory. This meant that students were required to attend classes in one of these subjects. Attending both was not an option; the classes were designed as mutually exclusive, and students were expected to stick to their choices at least for the duration of the academic year.

The introduction of religious and civic education provoked sharp reactions on the Serbian political scene. Immediately after the signing of the regulation, aides to the minister, Turajlić and Majić, submitted their resignations. The minister rejected their resignations and both stayed on, meaning that their protest did not have long-lasting

political consequences, but did resonate symbolically. Many international, as well as local civil society organizations, harshly criticized the decision. Two human rights organizations, Yugoslav Committee of Lawyers for Human Rights (YUKOM) and Forum Iuris, submitted an appeal to the Constitutional Court to consider whether the regulation violated the constitution. They argued that the recognition of “traditional” faiths (i.e., those allowed to hold religious education classes in public education institutions) represented an act of discrimination against other, smaller churches and religions, because they are not given equal treatment in terms of the provisions of religious education in schools, and thus potentially a violation of minority rights. They claimed that the introduction violated the principle of separation of church and state by introducing a faith-based subject and, furthermore, by requiring pupils to choose between that subject and civic education. Finally, the argument was that the introduction of religious education violated the freedom of religious expression, including the freedom to not express one’s religious beliefs, and created a situation in which religious or other beliefs could act as sources of divisions, lack of understanding, and differentiation (Constitutional Court 2003). Even certain religious officials, including the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Pavle, were rumored to have opposed the introduction of religious education to schools in the specific form it took.

At the end of the day, none of these protests changed the direction of the education reform or the place of religious (and civic) education in it. The Constitutional Court summarily rejected the objections coming from non-governmental organizations. Both religious and civic education remained in schools, later on extending to include all eight grades of elementary and four of secondary school. Although some voices still occasionally criticized religious education, with time the public discourse gradually shifted towards considering, if anything, the practical implications of these subjects. Two studies conducted in 2003, whose purpose was to evaluate the impacts of religious and civic education, focused on perceptions and reported behavioral change of parents and students, but avoided discussing the broader political context or implications of this policy (Joksimović 2005). The subsequent governments, elected in 2004, 2008, and 2012, did nothing to alter the status of religious and civic education.

3.3. Religious and Civic Education: A Policy Paradox?

The introduction of religious and civic education, both in its form and content, represented a substantial departure from the professed policy orientation of the new government. The process of its introduction did not involve a public consultation with the stakeholders or the “society,” and it almost completely circumvented or cut short the public debates around the issue. At the time when the decision to introduce religious and public education was made, the public opinion was very divided, especially concerning the role of religious education. Unlike in many other cases of public policy in the first period after the fall of Milošević, there were not even attempts at reaching public consensus around the decision. On the other hand, as opposed to, for instance, the issue of extradition of Milošević to The Hague, there was no external pressure to opt for a specific solution; international organizations did not welcome the introduction of religious education, and some even criticized it, more or less openly. Thus, there was no obvious rationale for the introduction of religious and civic education; most of all, there was no reason to introduce these two subjects as mandatory and mutually exclusive.

The most surprising side of this particular aspect of the education reform, however, turned out to be the unprecedented role given to religious communities in influencing public policy. The inclusion of faith-based religious education provided space for the Serbian Orthodox Church—along with other faiths that the legal act defined as “traditional”—to participate in the design of curricula, and also gave them the right to appoint teachers. Representatives of “traditional” religious communities were invited to meetings and began taking active part in the work of public bodies involved in designing and implementing aspects of the educational reform. In a related development, the School of Theology was reintegrated into the University of Belgrade. Religious education provided the venue for the government to begin financing churches, since religious officials were employed as teachers of religious education in public schools, and thus paid from the public budget.

Why was this aspect so problematic? No one remotely familiar with the developments preceding, during, and after the breakup of former Yugoslavia could have failed to notice that, throughout the period, religion—especially the major regional denominations (Orthodox

Christianity, Roman Catholicism, and Islam)—began playing an increasingly influential role. As the conflict in the region drew closer, ethnic and religious identities in political life coagulated, drawing clear divisions between (predominantly Orthodox) Serbs, (predominantly Catholic) Croats, and Bosniak Muslims⁶ (Wilmer 2002, 29). Respective churches played an important part in nationalist mobilization. For a long time, the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo had been equating its role with that of the protector and savior of the “Serb people.” In the 1980s, it also started bringing up the crimes that the Ustasha regime committed against Serbs and other minorities in the Independent State of Croatia, a puppet entity that existed during World War II, thus renewing both the memory and myth of Croatian-Serbian hostilities. The Catholic Church in Croatia accordingly began revisiting the role of the Ustasha and their collaborators, seeking to portray at least some of them as fighters for the freedom of the Croatian people; this sort of historical revisionism had been absent from Croatian public discourse ever since the Croatian Spring in 1971 and, not surprisingly, upset many Serbs in Croatia. In addition, the Church started spreading rumors of the apparitions of Virgin Mary in parts of Herzegovina traditionally populated by Croats, sparking mass pilgrimages as a not-too-subtle political reminder that, in the case of war, Croatia would claim a part of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Perica 2002; Mojzes 1998; Sells 1996; Ramet 2003). In Serbia, at least as much as in other Yugoslav republics, the conflation of religion and nationalism had a rather ominous sound. Although for most of the second half of the twentieth century the Serbian Orthodox Church had been at odds with the atheist and secular ideology of communism, during the 1980s the interests of the two actors began to converge (Perica 2002, 133–45). The Serbian Orthodox Church had placed itself at the forefront of the defense of “Serb national interests” in

⁶ The case of Bosniak Muslims is, of course, doubly relevant in this case; namely, the ethnonym already includes religious denomination, as a consequence of the political decision after the forming of post-WWII Yugoslavia to recognize the specific ethnic identity of the Muslim Slavic-speaking population in the country. As a consequence, in former Yugoslavia religious denomination was referred to as “muslim,” while members of the ethnic group were written with a capital letter “Muslim.” After the war, the term “Bosniak” started to be used together or interchangeably, denoting predominantly ethnic but also religious identity.

Kosovo, as well as in Croatia and Bosnia. At various points in time, this included providing spiritual support to extreme nationalist leaders and paramilitary forces, upholding expansionist and vindictive attitudes, and justifying violence against other ethnoreligious groups; simultaneously, extreme nationalists readily embraced religious symbols and rhetoric, aiming to present their struggles as part of the broader effort for Serbian national (and spiritual) survival.

This doesn't mean, of course, that the Serbian Orthodox Church, or any other religious community in the Balkans, was directly responsible for the conflict (cf. Sells 1996). As a matter of fact, many religious officials invested efforts to try to prevent the outbreak of the conflict, and, especially in the later years, made frequent calls to political leaders for peace (Perica 2002, 179–85). However, there could be little doubt about the churches' essentially nationalist and conservative stance, as well as their association with political parties involved in atrocities committed during the wars in former Yugoslavia. In this context, the decision of the newly elected regime to give the Serbian Orthodox Church and other "traditional" religious communities an increased role in public life seems incongruent with the government's determination to make a clear distinction from the former regime and its legacy, which included taking such controversial and potentially unpopular decisions as the extradition of Milošević to the ICTY. The introduction of religious (and civic) education in schools in Serbia, then, rather than just a—even if perhaps slightly confusing—piece of policymaking in a country in transition, appears to present a real policy paradox.

Policy paradoxes refer to situations in which policymakers pursue policies that seem to be contradictory to their general goals or ideological orientations, for no apparent reason (cf. Stone 2002, 2). In the case of the introduction of religious and civic education, there are many aspects that seem contradictory. Why was religious education introduced at all, given that there had been no public consensus on the need for its introduction, no international pressure to introduce it, and no universally agreed model according to which to do it? Why was it introduced as faith-based, parallel to (and mutually exclusive with) civic education, against international recommendations as well as the opinions of a significant part of the public in Serbia, including (at least) two of the closest aides of the minister of education, who attempted to resign after the decision? Finally, why did the

newly elected government seek the liaison with the Serbian Orthodox Church, whose conservative and nationalist ideological orientation, for the most part, went against the professed goals of the education reform, and which had ties with the previous regime's politics that the new government sought to distance itself from?

The authors that have so far attempted to analyze the introduction of religious (and, to lesser extent, civic) education to schools in Serbia offer rather partial answers to these questions. For example, Aleksov (2003, 19) points to the controversy in the mutual exclusivity of religious and civic education, as well as to technical unpreparedness for both subjects, attributing it to the tensions between the religious communities and the Ministry of Education and Sports. In his analysis, the introduction of religious education was the initiative of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which, desiring more influence over the public sphere, pressured the government to introduce religious education, and later, backed by other churches, pressured it into making the subject a mandatory elective. Kuburić and Vukomanović (2006, 132–33) criticize the abrupt and obligatory manner in which religious education was introduced, similarly seeing it as a result of the pressure of the dominant religious institutions on the government. All of these analyses presuppose that the behavior of the policymakers was rational, within the constraints imposed, to a large extent, by one of them—the Serbian Orthodox Church. Dulić, for instance, writes: “The Serbian Orthodox Church took an active part in designing the new, desirable collective identity of the Serbian people against the matrices of other cultures, and religions, in the spirit of traditionalism, autarchy, and de-secularization. The trend of redefining national identity in terms of Orthodox identity, and in particular, in terms of anticommunism and philetism, is a distinctive part of the ideological confusion which accompanies the Serbian process of transition” (Dulić 2011, 39).

Despite their ideological consistency and clear criticism of the introduction of religious education, where most of these explanations fail is in providing an explanation of the source of the power and influence the Serbian Orthodox Church allegedly had over the Serbian political elite at the time. Unlike some other churches in the region, the Serbian Orthodox Church is rather poor, and, throughout the second half of the twentieth century, kept a distance from the sphere of daily politics (cf. Radić 1994). During the 1990s, despite its growing ideo-

logical proximity to the policies of the state, the Church acquired very limited influence, except over issues related to religious customs and affairs. The presence of the Church in the public sphere grew as conflicts in the region exacerbated, but even at the height of interethnic tensions it hardly ever transgressed the boundary that separated it from the bureaucratic apparatus of the state. Thus, we need to ask why the new regime would have wanted to expand this sphere of influence, especially in the traditionally secular domain of education. One explanation is based on the fact that the ruling coalition after 2000 consisted in part of conservative Serbian nationalists, who were friendly towards the Serbian Orthodox Church. However, this group of political actors was not responsible for the introduction of religious education at all; the decision came from the Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić, who was not religious and could have, if nothing else, been described as a secular liberal.⁷ Other leading figures in the Ministry of Education, consisting mostly of secular intellectuals or members of the center-left Democratic Party, were not particularly pious either. Individual ideological preferences therefore cannot account for the introduction of religious and civic education.

This does not imply, however, that it's not important to look at actors. Stone (2002, 7) argues that understanding policy paradoxes requires looking beyond what she terms the "rationality project," or the concept of policymaking as a set of ordered steps, logically emanating from each other. This invites a critical examination of how particular actors construct, interpret, and transform different concepts in the process of policymaking. In other words, instead of assuming that policy decisions automatically follow individual (or group) ideological and political preferences, we need to look at the *specific symbolic weight and meaning* that these policies *assume* in the political process.

Thus, rather than attaching a specific meaning to certain decisions or ideological orientations, this chapter traces the evolution of

⁷ As one of his close associates put it when interviewed, "Now, although I sincerely doubt he [Z. Đinđić] was religious, he supported the madness of the building of the Temple of St. Sava [the biggest Christian Orthodox temple at the time, begun in 1988 and finished in 2006], invested a lot of effort into it, and then he presumably decided that was not enough and decided to introduce religious education."

these meanings in the context of the critical juncture presented by the process of transition in Serbia. The chapter will proceed with an in-depth analysis of the arguments and motivations in the policy discourse that surrounded and supported the introduction of religious and civic education. Rather than just reconstructing the political background of this decision, it will deal with normative frameworks and programmatic ideas that were reflected or “filtered” through institutions in the context of transition (cf. Schmidt 2010, 2008; Campbell 2002). In this process, the chapter will show how the introduction of religious and civic education reveals the values and ideas that were in the process of consolidating in the Serbian political scene, but, at the same time, reflected and reproduced broader social dynamics related to the transformation processes in the region.

3.4. Building Consensus: Changing Narratives on Religious Education

The issue of religious education in Serbia first became the subject of broader public discussion in 1992, shortly after the beginning of the conflicts following the breakup of former Yugoslavia. Organized by the Alliance of pedagogical associations of Serbia, the conclusions of the conference confirmed the “superiority of secular education in the society,” but suggested the introduction of a subject referred to as religious culture, history of religions or science of religions to the curriculum, in order to enable pupils to learn about different religions and “avoid religious extremes” (Kuburić 2002). Despite the negative message of the conference towards the possibility of introducing faith-based religious education to schools, here we can already see the cautious opening of the door to the presence of religion in the education system, as well as the implicit recognition of the church(es) as legitimate actors in education reform. For instance, the participants of the conference agreed that “religious education should be the responsibility of the Church” (ibid.).

In 1997, the Ministry for Religions and the Ministry of Education of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia jointly organized a round table in Montenegro on religious education, with the participation of a number of experts from the region. The gist of the round table was

the presentation of the results of public opinion surveys that claimed to show a significant popular interest for religious education. According to one, 67% of citizens of Montenegro had a positive attitude towards the introduction of religious education to schools, 18% were against, while those remaining did not have a particular attitude (*ibid.*).

The latter conference is particularly relevant, because it represents the first instance of the explicit use of the reporting of public opinion survey results to advocate, support, or justify the introduction of religious education to schools. In effect, what most of these surveys showed was that the public had a vaguely positive idea about the presence of religion as a topic in the curriculum, but the majority was in favor of a more “neutral” (not faith-based) approach to its teaching, and against the subject being mandatory. The main argument supporting the presence of religious topics in public schools was the need to “dispel prejudice” and make the curriculum “more open,” suggesting a sort of enlightening potential ascribed to religion and mirroring the recommendation to “avoid extremes” voiced at the 1992 conference in Belgrade.

A regional conference hosted in Maribor (Slovenia) in early 2001, which included the representatives of ministries of education from all of the republics in former Yugoslavia as well as education experts and researchers, concluded on a similar note. Participants stated that education should have a “value-neutral” basis allowing the pupils/students to form their own opinions; faith-based religious education was deemed to be an obstacle to this goal. In April 2001, another conference was held in Belgrade, with the title: “Women, religion, religious education: between spirituality and politics.” The participants were highly critical of the patriarchal tone of most religions and expressed concerns that introducing faith-based religious education to schools could have negative effects on gender equality. In sum, what both the results of public opinion surveys and expert discussions seemed to suggest was that there was a need or space for the teaching about religions in public schools; none of them, however, seemed to unequivocally endorse the idea of teaching religion in schools.

Having in mind the very cautious message of these conferences regarding religion in schools, the sharp response coming from the “educated public” when the Ministry of Education and Sports issued the Regulation on the introduction and organization of religious

education and the teaching of the alternative subject to the first grades of primary and secondary public schools in July 2001, was not unexpected. Multiple sources claim that the only consultation before the decision happened between Prime Minister Đinđić and heads of those churches that the regulation established as “traditional.” The regulation defined that religious education and the “alternative subject” (the name or content of civic education were still not decided at the time) will both be taught once per week, and would be optional. This meant that students (or their parents, in the case of minors) could choose one of those subjects, both or neither.

According to persons who were involved in the work of the Ministry of Education and Sports at the time, the decision was not seriously discussed with any of them, including the minister himself. All of them describe it as *fait accompli*: they “came to work one morning and then it [the regulation] arrived. We looked at each other and thought, ‘What is this?’” (personal communication with one of the officials). In the next instant, the minister and the state secretary for education went to see the prime minister, supposedly, to find out what was going on and why religious education has been introduced without their consent. It was presumably in this meeting that Đinđić managed to persuade them that the introduction of religious education was necessary, but consented to introducing civic education as the “alternative subject” to religious education. This, at least at the time, seemed to have pacified both the minister and the state secretary, who thought that by introducing civic education they had struck a “good bargain” by managing to “squeeze in” civic education. This, in turn, provoked the already mentioned resignation of two of the aides to the minister. One of them recalls: “I admit both [other aide] and I attacked them [the minister and state secretary] immediately, claiming that civic education cannot by any chance be an alternative to religious because they are not in any way...alternatives to each other. And they responded that we don’t know who Đinđić is and that we can be happy that they managed as much” (*ibid.*).

The reasons why the reactions from both the public and from within the state administration were not sharper or more sustained can be found in the timing of this particular policy decision. The regulation was issued at the end of July, just days before the beginning of the official holiday season otherwise known as the “dormant period”

both in the state administration and the media. This was also barely more than a month before the school year was due to start. Within this very limited time frame, the ministry was given the task to engage the parents and students in these new subjects. At the beginning of the school year 2001/02, thus, parents and schoolchildren were given a booklet with the title “Religious education in Serbia,” containing a questionnaire in which they were to choose which faith’s religious education classes they or their children wanted to attend. They had a week to decide.

The booklet explained the introduction of religious education in the following words: “Research shows that 87% citizens of our country are religious. The return of religious education to schools in the process of the democratization of society enables them to exercise a number of fundamental human rights, foremost the right of parents to have their children educated in accordance with their religious beliefs,” adding that “religious education is a natural and necessary element of schooling in almost all democratic countries” (in Gredelj 2002, 281). Three things are of particular interest here. The first is the recurrent use of statistical data to supposedly illustrate prevalent public opinion (“87% are religious”). The second is the association between the “return” of religion to schools and the “process of democratization of society.” The third, and final, is the concept of religious education as “natural” (presumably, inherited) and “necessary” (presumably, needed). The last concept, one of the “naturalness” of religion, also appeared in the instructions for teachers and the curricula for religious education.

The regulation on the curricula for religious education in secondary schools stated that the goals of the subject were to “[t]estify to the content of belief and the spiritual experience of traditional churches and religious communities existing in the Serbian space, to provide for pupils a holistic religious view of the world and life, and to enable them to freely adopt the spiritual and life values of the church or community they *historically belong* to, as well as the *preservation and development of their own religious and cultural identity*. This being said, the introduction of pupils to the beliefs and spiritual experiences of their own, historically given, church or religious community, should be through an open and tolerant dialogue” (Government of the Republic of Serbia 2001, 2, emphasis J.B.). Here we encounter not only the idea that religion is “natural,” but also that belonging to a particular church

or faith is “historically given.” Taken together, these assumptions—that 87% of the population in Serbia is religious; that religion and democratization are, somehow, linked; and that religion is a marker of inherited, historical, and cultural identity—form the gist of the cognitive and normative construction that drove the introduction of religious (and, though in a less obvious manner, civic) education in Serbia, and set the structures for the further development of educational policies.

3.5. The Name(s) of Numbers

The frequency with which the figure of 87% religious population in Serbia appeared as a justification for a particular policy decision suggests that there was a strong reason for presenting the introduction of religious education as a kind of reflection of the popular will. The argument itself had nothing to do with the “real” statistical basis: some authors, notably Gredelj (2002), demonstrated that the figure was at best overemphasized and at worst entirely fabricated. One of the public opinion surveys conducted in 2001 by the Center for the Study of Alternatives showed that, in the sample of 1698 Serbian citizens, 88% declared they belonged to particular religions (12% said they were non-believers). But in the same sample, when asked how important religion was in their lives, only 26% ascribed it significant value. Those who responded that religion bore little or no significance at all amounted to 37% (Gredelj 2002, 282–83). However, these figures were based on a sample and not on the entire population (cf. Desrosières 1998, 201–35). At the time, the last census had been carried out in Yugoslavia in 1990; the following, scheduled for 2000, was postponed to 2002 due to political turmoil. Even if the sample were entirely representative, it revealed that respondents primarily saw religion as a reflection of some aspect of (most likely ethnic) identity, and not as an important factor in their daily lives. Least of all did this translate into unanimous support for the introduction of religious education; pilot surveys conducted on the matter revealed that about 65% respondents had a vaguely positive reaction to the idea, while over 30% had a predominantly negative response (Gredelj 2002, 284–85).

Of course, it was not the “real” (statistical) basis of the decision, as much as the idea that it could be presented as an expression of the

“popular will,” that motivated the use of these figures. The government elected in 2000 was the first to make full use of polls and other forms of reporting of public opinion, even before elections, to shape its strategies (cf. Bieber 2003, 86). Desrosières writes: “Creating a political space involves and makes possible the creation of a space of common measurement, within which things may be compared” (1998, 9). The statistical representation of the percentage of the citizens of Serbia who were religious was not a neutral piece of data; it was the figure that both informed and supported a specific approach to policy. In the case of religious and civic education, however, the choice was based on a specific behavioral assumption: namely, that the policy preferences of the population would stem, in a more-or-less automatic fashion, from their religious (and, by extension, ethnic and linguistic) identities. To borrow Desrosières’ words again, it entailed the transformation of the language of description and science (there is) into that of prescription and action (we must) (*ibid.*, 335). The concept that there is 87% population who is religious meant that we (i.e., the government) must introduce religious education to public schools. Simply put, the assumption was that Serbs would appreciate the opportunity to have Serbian Orthodox religious education at school; Muslims will welcome religious education lessons from the Islamic Community; and Roman Catholics could be made happy with Catholic religious education in schools. Within this framework, the introduction of civic education as a subject alternative to religious education assumes a new meaning: it was indeed “religious education for atheists,” introduced with the idea of appealing to that percentage of the population in Serbia (regardless of whether it was 12% or 35%) that didn’t welcome the concept of faith-based education.

In this context, the simultaneous introduction of religious and civic education, as one of the first and most controversial aspects of education policymaking in post-Milošević Serbia, couldn’t be further away from “ideological confusion” it was identified with in the beginning. On the contrary, it emerges as a consequence of a wider political strategy whose goal was to win favor with both sides of what was then perceived to be the political spectrum (cf. Todosijevic 2008). One end was composed of voters who identified with conservative values, such as the nation-state, tradition, and the Church; on the other end were those of more liberal orientation, who presumably opted for cosmo-

politan, European, and civic values, embedded in the curriculum for civic education.

The idea behind the introduction of these subjects was thus rather simple. By reforming the curriculum in a way that would accommodate the presumed wishes and preferences of different parts of the population, the ruling coalition in post-Milošević Serbia hoped to increase its popularity or at least limit the voices of opposition. In other words, it was based on the “assumption that policy positions are structured by underlying ideological dimensions [and that] these ideological dimensions represent the structure of political discourse, representing a linguistic shorthand for political communication and competition” (Gabel and Anderson 2002, 896). Differently put: the government hoped that preferences for a certain type of ideology would translate into support for specific types of policies, including those in education. Those of a more conservative orientation were expected to support religious education, while civic education was aimed at those of a more liberal orientation. However, the dichotomy between religious and civic education betrays more than just the perceptions of the configuration of political preferences in Serbia. Equally, if not more importantly, it reflected the assumptions concerning the structure of the Serbian society as such. In this context, the dichotomy between religious and civic education corresponded, to a great extent, to an older division: that between the “first” and the “second” Serbia.

3.6. Two Subjects, Two Serbias?

The distinction between the “first” and “second” Serbia is a form of political, sociological, cultural, and symbolical-geographical classification aimed at differentiating the urban, civic elites from those who, by the virtue of their background and cultural traits, could be defined as “uncultured.” The narrative of “two Serbias” originated in the early days of the 20th century, and initially was introduced to mark the divisions between the proletariat and bourgeoisie in the urban centers. During the 1990s, Belgrade’s liberal, pro-Western intellectual circles adopted this definition, seeking to distance themselves from the ideology and politics of the “first,” Milošević’s Serbia. The “first Serbia” was constructed as corrupt, nationalist, patriarchal, and

violent; “second Serbia” was concentrated in Belgrade and other urban centers, which claimed intellectual sophistication, liberal and cosmopolitan values, and openness to the world (cf. Čolović and Mimica 1992, 2002; Bieber 2003, 83). It was the latter Serbia that, presumably, gave birth to the opposition movement to Milošević, and the one that—again presumably—won in October 2000 (Ramet 2011).

The narrative of the “second” (or “other”) Serbia can be placed in the context of the specific evolutionary trajectories of the educated bourgeoisie in Central and Eastern European countries. As Eyal, Szélenyi, and Townsley argued, in the absence of a “propertied” bourgeoisie, this role was, in Central and Eastern Europe, played by the cultural bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie, in this sense, is defined not structurally, by its position in relations of production, but as the class whose historical project is to “modernize” the society (Eyal, Szélenyi, and Townsley 2000, 60). The concepts of culture and education, as signs of “distinction,” played a key role in this process: “The understanding of *Verbürgerlichung* is specifically Central European. It reflects the region’s uneven process of modernization (...) It is in this context of ‘uneven modernization’ that the idea of a uniquely Central European *Verbürgerlichung* was formulated. Slowly but surely, Central European intellectuals and ‘mandarins’ began to recast the meaning of *Bürgertum*. It no longer denoted merely the autonomy of the city-dweller, but the culture and education [*Bildung*] of the educated classes (...) The members of the educated classes were thus decidedly on the side of modernity, civil society and the *Bürger* form of life” (2000, 59).

The early Central and Eastern European bourgeoisie, thus, established itself as the paragon and the carrier of modernization and progress. After WWII and its aftermath cut short the early project of *embourgeoisement*, this social stratum continued accumulating cultural capital. Given that the accumulation of economic capital was not possible (or was extremely limited) under communism, education and culture became paramount signs of “distinction” in relation to other social strata. In the context of former Yugoslavia, the importance of education—especially higher education—in the reproduction of social structure was rendered most visible by the vocation-oriented education reform described in the previous chapter, which aimed to challenge the bourgeoisie’s “monopoly” on institutions of higher learning and culture.

The fall of the Berlin Wall substantially altered the position of the educated bourgeoisie. The specific form of post-communist transition in Central and Eastern Europe meant that, on the one hand, market institutions modeled after those in the West emerged relatively quickly, but, on the other hand, the development of a propertied domestic bourgeoisie was relatively slow (*ibid.*, 54). This made the cultural bourgeoisie an “ideal” candidate to oversee the transition to capitalism. Their education and relationship with “the West” provided the necessary credentials to lead this process; their historical mission to “modernize” the society furnished the teleology for the project. In a sense, it was the return of the modernizing project hailing from the end of the nineteenth century: “Both groups of intellectuals were interested in the transformation of the old order (be it gentry-ruled or communist) into civil society. Their claims were not based merely on the fact that intellectuals had better credentials than the incumbents of political office (although they did not neglect to mention this). In both cases, their claim to power and entitlement was based on the unique prestige accorded to ‘men of ideas’ in Central Europe. These intellectuals were far more successful than their Western counterparts in persuading society of their role as moral and spiritual leaders. They were never perceived as mere ‘professionals,’ with a monopoly over technical knowledge, but as ‘intellectuals’ with a special ethical responsibility for society as a whole. They were supposed to be the searchlight into the future, the soul of the nation” (Eyal, Szélenyi, and Townsley 2000, 56).

Intellectuals and other public figures identifying themselves with the “second Serbia” thus saw their historical task as the “modernization” of society, understood as the transition into capitalism. Although this project nowhere went unchallenged, the case of Serbia was possibly the most problematic. Here, the civic intelligentsia had to compete not only with the (former) communist *nomenklatura*—exemplified by Milošević and its regime—but also with other intellectuals. These other intellectuals had similar credentials—for instance, they were former dissidents—but subscribed to substantially different political and ideological agendas (cf. Miller 2007; Dragovic-Soso 2002): they identified with the nationalist project, and saw the future of the country as primarily dependent on the solution of the “national question.” The “national question,” however, held a threat of the continued involvement in conflicts and territorial disputes over the legacy of

former Yugoslavia; thus, it presented an obstacle to swift modernization (transition), and an obstacle to the role that the intellectuals of “second Serbia” wanted to play in it.

The narrative of the “two Serbias” consequently evolved with two main objectives. One was to assert, for one part of the educated bourgeoisie, the historical and moral right to define the direction of Serbia’s transition to capitalism. This was embedded in the idea of the *Bildungsbürgertum* as the social class that is the historical carrier of the values associated with modernity. The other was to draw a clear demarcation line between these and other values in the Serbian political life. Those other values, such as nationalism, conservatism, backwardness, and “primitivism,” were accordingly identified as anti-modern and “dumped” onto different social groups and actors labeled as the “first Serbia.” The fact that the “first Serbia” never accepted this label is somewhat indicative in this regard. The narrative, in fact, served as a source of social distinction, the process of constructing class categories based on differences in cultural and political choices (Bourdieu 1984b). By defining certain types of values as more “elevated” than others, the “second Serbia” was providing justification for its own elite position, asserting its right to define and judge values conducive to Serbia’s transition, and steer it on its path to modernity. The concept of “two Serbias,” in this sense, acted as a potent mechanism of social stratification in the context of transition.

However, over a period of time, the concept of “two Serbias” has evolved from an auto-descriptive designation, used by members of a specific group, to a description casually used to refer to others; in other words, from an “emic” category to a fully operationalized category with heuristic power. For example, in the introductory chapter of a book entitled “Civic and Uncivic Values: Serbia in the Post-Milošević Era,” Sabina Ramet makes a distinction between “civic” values—presumably, worthy of citizens in a liberal democracy—and “uncivic” ones, attached to the Milošević times. She describes the characteristics of the “civic” group as attachment to common citizenship as the basis for the community, support to ethnic tolerance, interconfessional harmony, human equality, tolerance of sexual minorities, and the rule of law, as well as support to the entry into European Union and cooperation with the Hague Tribunal; while characteristic of the “uncivic” values are nationalism, irredentism and chauvinism,

alliance with Russia rather than the EU, resistance to the ICTY, and protesting against Kosovo's independence (Ramet 2011, 3).

Besides being an inevitably simplifying distinction, this type of classification also a priori excludes the possibility of the existence of hybrid identities that would attempt to combine different aspects of these values: for instance, it ignores the possibility of civic nationalism and attaches the notion of "uncivicness" (or "uncivility") to protests against the independence of Kosovo, which, although they may not be treated favorably from the side of the more prominent representatives of the "civic" strand, still represent a form of legitimate political action and thus civic behavior *par excellence*.⁸ Its import into analytical language, however, means that the distinction between the "second" as civic, and "first" as "uncivic" Serbia has become fully operationalized as a paradigm used to understand and explain social and political processes in transitional Serbia.

This dichotomy substantially shaped the politics in Serbia after Milošević, including the introduction of religious and civic education. The creators of the education reform accepted the idea that society was divided between the "first" and the "second" Serbia. Thus, an easy interpretation would be that religious education would have been introduced to appeal to the "first" or "uncivic" Serbia, while the other subject, civic education, would have been targeted at the part of the population that identified with the "second" or "civic" Serbia. However, the picture is not that simple. Serbia's transitional elites had a more complex relationship to religion and the Church, one that was partly based on the legacy of anti-Milošević protests in the 1990s.

3.7. The State and the Church

Most intellectuals affiliated with the "second Serbia" did strongly criticize the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in supporting the conflict in former Yugoslavia, and its traditionalist and nationalist dis-

⁸ Of course, it is questionable whether this label could be extended to the protests that happened in Belgrade after the declaration of independence of Kosovo, which involved angry mobs storming sports equipment stores and setting fire on embassies, including those of the US and Croatia.

courses. In accordance with their modernist outlook, they preferred a society that was secular, with the church distant from the state (cf. Marković 1992). Furthermore, religion was equated with the revival of nationalism: “The competing post-Yugoslav nationalist discourses articulated, among other things, notions of naturalness, purity, sacrifice, and the danger of contamination and ambiguity. This was reinforced by a religious revival, as clerical authority and religious traditions were considered to be more prominent in the countryside” (Jansen 2005, 155; see also Spasić 2006). However, the image of the Church was more ambiguous. One indicative statement comes from Čedomir Jovanović, deputy prime minister at the time of the introduction of religious and civic education, and one of Đinđić’s closest confidantes and associates. In a television debate in 2005, he stated that the introduction of religious education had been a “completely pragmatic” decision aimed to “appease the Serbian Orthodox Church following the extradition of Milošević to The Hague” (quoted in Kuburić and Vukomanović 2006, 114).

This statement reveals two important assumptions: first, that the ruling coalition at the time thought the Serbian Orthodox Church would want to protect Milošević and that it had something against his extradition; and second, that the opinion of the Serbian Orthodox Church was representative of the opinion of the larger part of the Serbian population. Besides reaffirming the strategic conflation of religion and the support to Milošević’s legacy, the statement offers a glimpse of a deeply ambiguous relationship that the top echelons of the new government had with the Serbian Orthodox Church. It was this relationship, more than any activity of the church *as such*, that played the key role in the introduction of religious education in 2001.

Many of the members of the opposition during the times of Milošević kept religious customs, primarily the celebration of the day of the patron saint (*Slava*).⁹ In the urban centers of Serbia after World War II, religion was kept as a form of “tradition,” but more importantly, as a form of resistance to the communist regime’s militant secularism. During the 1990s, in the process of desecularization, more

⁹ Originating in rural societies, *slava* was an annual family holiday when relatives, neighbors, and friends would come to visit and enjoy elaborate meals, sometimes for two or three days in a row.

people took it up, “rediscovering” their religious roots. Although the religious revival may have been more visible in the rural areas, urban elites were not immune to this trend. During those years, the source of distinction became the longevity of one’s religious practice or defiance of the communist/socialist anti-religiosity; those who had been religious before the trend of desecularization were identified as “true” believers; those who had ostensibly become religious in the 1990s were scolded in the same way as *nouveaux riches* (which they were frequently identified with): newcomers, war profiteers, *sans-culottes*.¹⁰ Thus, as much as it could be identified with the war-mongering and ethnic bloodshed in the wars in former Yugoslavia, religion carried another, equally deep symbolic connotation: that of the opposition to the communist/socialist regime, which was by definition atheist and anti-clerical. In this sense, although not by any means on the same scale, the meaning of religion for the opposition to Milošević during the 1990s had some similarities with the meaning of the Catholic Church in Poland during the *Solidarność* struggles.

The best illustration of this complex relationship is an event that took place during the anti-regime protests in 1996/97. The street protests began in autumn 1996, after the local and municipal elections were allegedly stolen by Milošević’s and his wife’s parties. The protests continued into winter, developing into different manifestations of civil disobedience. One of the chief marks of the protests were walks the protesters took, mainly in the center of Belgrade; during the walks, they used instruments, shouted slogans, carried banners and tried to engage other residents, who often greeted them from balconies and windows. The walks represented a symbolic reclaiming of the urban space of the city for its “original” urban residents, representatives of the “second Serbia” (Prošić-Dvornić 1998, 1993). Although there was a formal distinction between the political protests of the opposition parties and protests of students of the University of Belgrade, in reality, they took place just steps away from each other and often took walks and actions

¹⁰ One of the telling instances of this practice of symbolic differentiation was the story that approvingly circled in Belgrade during the 1990s, how Vojislav Koštunica, one of the leaders of the opposition and Serbia’s first post-Milošević President, refused to come to work on the day of his patron saint even under communist regime.

together (cf. Popadić 1999). Despite political tensions and violent incidents, the protest continued for three months in a sort of weird “balance of powers” between the protesters and the Milošević regime.

However, as international pressure grew, the regime became more repressive and finally sent a police force to block the daily protest march in one of the main streets of Belgrade. The blocking attempt turned into a three-day long “standoff” between the police and student (and other) protesters, known as the “Cordon in Kolarčeva [street],” turning into one of the most famous parts of the protest. Students organized day and night shifts and brought music, food, and drinks to the location where the police line had blocked them. The site became a 24-hour party; however, it was a party with a clear political meaning, as the police cordon remained in place rejecting the protesters’ demands to be allowed to march freely down the main street. With time, both exhaustion and tensions grew; it seemed as if neither party was willing to step down. However, on the morning of January 27, 1997, the situation changed once again.

January 27 is known as the holiday of St. Sava, patron saint of the Serbs (and, incidentally, of education). Previously, it was announced that Patriarch Pavle, head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, would lead a ritual procession through the streets of Belgrade, from the Congregational Church to the Temple of St. Sava. The procession was supposed to cross the line between police forces and protesters. On the morning of January 27, one hour before the procession was scheduled to appear, the police forces withdrew. The protesters (many of whom shocked and surprised) happily walked freely again; later on, preceded by church officials carrying religious insignia, many of them joined the march to the Temple of St. Sava in Vračar. The message was clear: even Milošević’s forces must withdraw in front of the (symbolic) power of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Besides representing a clear political point for the Serbian Orthodox Church (as well as confirming the reverence of the regime for it), the event had another significant aspect. It was one of the first instances in which the Serbian Orthodox Church publicly displayed support to the opposition. Although some religious leaders had criticized Milošević for irregularities during elections, as well as for his treatment of protesters and opposition leaders, the religious procession on January 27, 1997 clearly showed that the Serbian Orthodox

Church might be willing to visibly mobilize in a shared political direction with the civic opposition—namely, against Milošević. The symbolic meaning of religion for the new regime, then, was at least twofold. Although, on the one hand, it was associated with the growth of nationalism, on the other hand it represented a “unifying force” that managed to push away (even) the forces commanded by Milošević.

Religion, however, was more than just an (albeit late) ally against Milošević. Most importantly, it represented a symbolic link with the past—but not the communist past, which lurked in the background, having been but scratched by the swift extradition of Milošević to The Hague. It represented a link with the pre-WWII Serbia and Yugoslavia, a capitalist, monarchist, bourgeois society, where religion was indeed present in schools. This society and its values were what the early communists fought against, and what they pledged to eradicate after emerging victorious from the World War II. The secularization of education embedded in the 1952 law was one of the steps in that direction. The “reintroduction” of religious education and the return of the Serbian Orthodox Church to its “proper” role in the society was thus a symbolic strategy of constructing historical continuity where, of course, there was none.

3.8. Policy in Context

Rather than just as a symbolic act, this strategy needs to be understood in its specific context. The first aspect of it is the context of dealing with the past. Following the controversial issue of the extradition of Milošević and the “double burden” of the responsibility for the crimes committed in the conflict during the breakup of Yugoslavia, but also those potentially committed during communist rule, the establishment of the symbolic continuity with a historical period that preceded both had a specific weight. It actually entailed the negation of *everything that happened in between*: as if, with the introduction of religious education, the new regime symbolically erased the period between the end of WWII and 2000. The “return” of religious education to schools, as the often-repeated parable went, “after almost 50 years of absence,” was a way of linking with the (interrupted) traditions of the pre-war Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and also the “reversal” of the wrongs com-

mitted by the communist regime and its successors. In this way, the new regime was also trying to assert its own legitimacy: by claiming continuity with the regime that preceded communism, it sought to distance itself as much as possible from the governing structures in between. Following Stan (2012, 499–501), we could say that the introduction of religious education represents a striking example of combining the “politics of the past” with the “politics of the present” in the search for legitimacy during periods of transition.

The introduction of religious education, instead of representing a “policy paradox” or a contradictory aspect in the process of education reform, thus emerges as a form of symbolic politics that aimed to exploit the historical association between the Church (and religious education) and the capitalist Yugoslavia before the World War II, constructed as an “ideal” society before the “fall” into communism. These forms of constructions of the past and inventions of continuity with the times before WWII, while simultaneously negating any connections with the precedent regime, were characteristic of almost all transitional parties in the successor states of former Yugoslavia – as well as in many other Central and Eastern European contexts. In Serbia, this particular form of constructing the past also enabled the political actors who assumed power at the time to negate any connection with, or responsibility for, the atrocities committed by the previous regime during the 1990s. Symbolical identification with the regime before WWII meant renouncing the legacy of the communist regime that replaced it and, by extension, that of Milošević as its legal and, at least partially ideological, successor. This is why the issue of the extradition of Milošević—an “inconvenient” reminder of the legacy of the more recent, and controversial, history—was, in a manner of speaking, counterbalanced by a political (at least as much as educational) move that addressed at a more distant past, one that was also easier to idealize and purge of problematic elements (cf. Hobsbawm 1983, 1).

The second aspect in which this policy needs to be understood is in relation to the social dynamics embedded in the dichotomy between the “first” and the “second” Serbia. On the one hand, the introduction of religious and civic education can be interpreted as an attempt to integrate the presumed preferences of these two social groups within the same education reform, thus, supposedly accommodating both.

However, the picture changes if we take into account the specific form this policy assumed. Namely, in the second year of its implementation, religious and civic education became mutually exclusive: children who attended one could not attend the other. Thus, the policy contained the assumption of an unbridgeable divide between the “two Serbias”—the religious, nationalist one, and the civic, cosmopolitan one—that could never be overcome. In other words the *class* division between the two Serbias was here to stay.

The important thing to take into account, however, is that the discourse of two Serbias did not stem out of nowhere. Unlike the statistical data used to justify the introduction of religious education, which at least *claimed* to rely on “hard facts,” the discourse of the civic “second” Serbia fighting against the anti-modern “onslaught” of the nationalist, “first” Serbia was, as noted earlier, created by those on the “second” side and used, especially during the 1990s, to legitimize the cultural and political project of Serbia’s “second *Bildungsbürgertum*.” Thus, it was (and is) an arbitrary social distinction. Its integration into education reform—a reform whose architects, if nothing else, largely hailed from the ranks of the “second” Serbia—was not a reflection of any “natural” order, but rather a projection of the social structure as one part of Serbian intelligentsia saw it.

In this process, the dichotomy between religious and civic education petrified the idea of “eternal” or at least *longue durée* divisions that continue to define the political and social dynamics in Serbia. Writing about the tension between the civic and “uncivic” values in post-Milošević Serbia, Dulić argued:

This anti-modernization stance began in the first decades of the nineteenth century and has persisted until an advanced date, *here and now*. It parallels political formulas expressed by parties of the center and right of the center, and many other political, ideological and cultural entities. They all openly undermine critical efforts for fundamental reforms (...) and ultimately better legal and economic foundations for the Serbian state. In this way the historical conflict between *traditionalists* and *modernists* had been going on in Serbia for a century and is *now resuscitated* in contemporary Serbian political theatre. The two *opposite and antagonistic* conceptions of the “national project” have been transferred from

politics to economy, culture, education, and the public space (2011, 26, emphasis J.B.).

What can be observed here is the same form of symbolic politics, or “invention of tradition,” that was used to justify the introduction (“return”) of religious education. Dulić transports the conflict between the political camps she terms “traditionalists” and “modernists” from the late nineteenth century into “here and now,” claiming that these “opposite and antagonistic” conceptions substantially inform the politics and policies of contemporary Serbia. The idea is clear: Serbian society is divided into two parts, with opposing values, ideas, and political projects, which can never be reconciled. Their antagonism stems from the political and class divisions from more than a century ago: thus, the past is alive and well, and it continues to inform, shape, and determine the structure of political preferences in Serbia. As Dulić writes, “[e]ven after his death, Milošević continues to divide Serbs into two enemy blocks” (2011, 29).

However, is it really (the specter of) Milošević that “does” this? Although preferences roughly corresponding to the differences between “first” and “second” Serbia could be considered somewhat salient for understanding the political dynamics of present-day Serbia (cf. Todosijević 2008), at the time of the introduction of religious and civic education this was hardly the case. This means that the dichotomy between religious and civic education not only (and perhaps not at all) corresponded with the existing divisions in Serbian society, but also helped reproduce them, and embedded them in institutional arrangements that extended way beyond the usual sphere of politics. As Knutsen and Scarbrough (1995) emphasize, political cleavages need to be constructed, maintained, and reproduced. They necessitate “(...) a relatively persistent social division which gives rise to ‘objectively’ identifiable groups within society—according to class, religion, economic, or cultural interests, or whatever. Secondly, a cleavage engages some set of values common to members of the group; group members know a ‘common life’ in so far as they share the same value orientation. Thirdly, a cleavage is institutionalized in some form of organization—most commonly a political party” (1995, 494).

Although it is questionable to what extent the social division between the “first” and the “second” Serbia is (or was) “objective,”

what can be said with more or less certainty is that the distinction between the bourgeoisie and “others” was perceived as a source of social tension both before WWII and after. As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the main drivers of the vocation-oriented education reform introduced in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia in the 1970s was to stop, and reverse, the reproduction of this type of social inequality. The project failed due to a number of factors, and the period of the breakup of former Yugoslavia saw the “retrenchment” of the cleavages between the “two Serbias.” This cleavage also included the concept of “shared values” introduced by Knutsen and Scarbrough, with “second” Serbia being identified as the bearer of civilizing and modernizing values, and the “first” as the paragon of “primitivism” and anti-modernism. The third “step,” however, is a bit more problematic. Although there are some parties on the Serbian political scene which can (or could) be identified with the “first” and the “second” Serbia, the boundaries are not very clear. However, what is important here is not the “real” or constructed nature of the dichotomy between the “two Serbias”: as we will remember from the story of the introduction of religious and civic education, the ideological “makeup” of the political parties that supported specific solutions did not always match the solutions themselves. The fact is that this social cleavage was institutionalized through education policy *before* political parties could do it (cf. Mair 1997); thus, the education reform legitimized the social distinction between the “first” and the “second” Serbia earlier than it became solidified through political and social dynamics of transition.

The most important implication of this type of education policy construction was that social (and, by extension, political) identities were operationalized as clearly delineated and fixed. In this context, it is not surprising that, for instance, the discourse of religious education was infused with ideas about the need for students to learn about “their culture” and traditions they “historically belong to.” The assumption was that identities existed before their political expression: one was either born into a civic (education) family, or into a religious (education) family. Thus, as “objective” social categories, identities preceded policies. The concept of policy preferences and structure of political support that informed this particular aspect of policymaking was based on a static and essentialist concept of political subjectivity.

Religious and civic education, ultimately, did not aim to educate (in the sense of transmission of knowledge and skills); had it been the case, faith-based religious education would have probably stayed outside of schools, a general and neutral subject aiming to inform children with the basic postulates of world religions would have been introduced into the curriculum, and civic education would have been mandatory for everybody, given the importance of skills related to social and political participation for the future citizens of a relatively novel democracy. The function of these two subjects was education in another sense: that of socializing children and young people into a specific social group or class. The role of the state had transformed from an active shaper of ideas and preferences into a provider of venues for solidifying and petrifying class distinctions.

3.9. Conclusions

This chapter aimed to show how the introduction of religious and civic education, possibly the most controversial part of the education reform initiated after the regime change in Serbia in 2000, can be understood as an integral part of the social and political transition. Rather than being a “contradiction in terms,” the simultaneous introduction of these two subjects to primary and secondary schools is indicative of the broader social and political dynamics in the region after the fall of Milošević, as well as of the assumptions and ideologies that underpinned the political agenda of the new regime.

On one level, the introduction of religious and civic education constituted an attempt of the newly elected regime to appeal to or “pacify” two opposed ends of the political spectrum. One end consisted of Serbia’s liberal intelligentsia, the self-proclaimed “second” or “Other” Serbia, who opposed nationalism and privileged civic forms of political subjectivity. The other was the “first” Serbia, which was traditional, nationalist, and anti-modern. Civic education was to appeal to the first group; religious education, to the second. It should be made clear that the architects of the education reform, for the most part, belonged to the civic group. Thus, the introduction of religious education should not be seen as the “endorsement” of the values that the Church was supposed to present; rather, as Deputy Prime

Minister Jovanović noted, it was a “concession”—partially a thank-you note to the Serbian Orthodox Church for supporting the opposition to Milošević beginning in 1997, and partially an attempt to symbolically incorporate the diversity of political and ideological options on the Serbian political scene, and thus, hopefully, minimize the reactions to potentially more challenging aspects of the new regime’s agenda—including the extradition of Milošević to The Hague.

On the symbolic level, however, this policy had another meaning. Rather than an endorsement of the Serbian Orthodox Church as such, the introduction of religious education was supposed to signify the symbolic reconnection with the historical and political context before religious education was banned from schools. More specifically, it represented the bridge with the pre-WWII Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which, although predominantly agricultural, had a budding, mostly pro-European bourgeoisie. The association with this cultural and political epoch (or, more precisely, its highly idealized and purified version) was meant to amplify the distance from the period of communist rule that followed it. Symbolically, the “reintroduction” of religious education marked the “return” of the pre-communist period, and hence a negation of everything that had taken place in between.

In the context of dealing with the past, the act had a twofold value. On the one hand, negation of the period of communist rule in the second half of the twentieth century also meant avoiding the controversial aspect of confronting the legacy of the previous regimes. The issue, which had proven to be problematic in virtually all post-communist countries (cf. Stan 2012), was even more painful in Serbia, given its dual legacy of both communist rule and the involvement of its successor regime in Serbia in the wars during the breakup of Yugoslavia. On the other hand, paradoxically, the introduction of religious education was a (self-confessed) attempt to appease the reactions to one of the potentially most explosive acts in the context of dealing with the past—Milošević’s extradition to The Hague.

The ambiguous and inconsistent use and meaning of political symbols should not be surprising. Namely, the intention of the new regime was not to build new values, new consciousness, or an ideologically clear path of development. On the contrary: it was to stay in power. If staying in power required the negotiation with, incorporation, or even endorsement of elements highly problematic even in the

context of very recent political history, it didn't matter; at the time, politics has already ceased to be a matter of principles and become a matter of pragmatism. Serbia's "second *Bildungsbürger*tum" had arrived to guide (and steer) the transition from a "backwards" to a modern society infused with its own values, and as a return for this position, it was willing to make whichever ideological concessions necessary to maintain it.

This also explains the incorporation of the seemingly contradictory values underpinning religious and civic education within the same education reform. The ruling elite, at the time composed predominantly of the representatives of the "second" Serbia, did not for a moment pause to question the implications of dividing values (and children) into "religious" and "civic." In their minds, these two groups were *objectively already separated*; for some, since the nineteenth century. Nor, for that matter, did it cross their minds to consider the social and economic—thus, contingent—corollaries of belonging to the "first" or the "second" Serbia: they didn't bother with the questions such as whether nationalism was more appealing to those who were left without other bases of social support during the 1990s, or whether listening to "turbo folk"—that *bête noire* associated with the "first Serbia"—had to do with class at least as much as with "taste." These divisions were seen as coherent, natural, and long-lasting. Thus, the best an education reform could do was to "contain" them, by offering something for everyone, or, more precisely, for everyone who could fit into the pre-defined social categories.

In and through this, thus, one of the first aspects of the education reform introduced after 2000 actually helped petrify the social divisions in Serbia. It divided the population into "believers" and "citizens," or, differently put, into the "uneducated" masses and the small social elite that could dispense with such anti-modern values as religion. Of course, this distinction between the "citizens" or the bourgeoisie and "others" is not particularly new in the context of this book. It appeared first as the source of social distinction and an object of education policies in the 1960s, when the vocation-oriented education identified the "bourgeois" intellectuals at universities as the usurpers of the Yugoslav path to socialism, and education institutions as the sites of reproduction of social inequalities that gave the bourgeoisie a privileged spot. In a sense, then, the introduction of civic education

in Serbia after the regime change represented a real return, or a victory, for the bourgeoisie. From being “purged” (and at times literally expelled) from education institutions, the discourses, practices, and values of *Bildungsbürgertum* have come to occupy a prominent place in education policy once again.

One important difference, however, lies in the way in which the two education reforms—vocation-oriented education on the one hand, and the one that introduced religious and civic education on the other—operationalized the relationship between education, social identities, and political subjectivities. The education reform implemented in the 1970s framed political subjectivity (and agency) as emanating directly from social identity, which, in turn, could be reduced to a class position. This is why it identified the discontent and the spreading of ideas that were “alien” to socialism developing at universities in the 1960s with the “bourgeois” domination over institutions of higher learning. This is also why it targeted secondary education as the source of reproduction of social—read class—inequalities. By reducing the number of the children of the bourgeoisie who went into higher education and increasing their numbers in the actively laboring force, it hoped to demolish the idea of the university as the protected “breeding ground” of the intellectual elites. Despite its ideological rigidity, the vocation-oriented education reform thus saw education as playing a key role in the abolishment of social (read class) divisions.

The education reform implemented after the fall of Milošević had a far less ambitious agenda. The endorsement of religious and civic education was motivated by the desire to appeal to (or appease) both sides of the political spectrum. The assumption was that preferences for religious or civic education were already “out there,” or rather, that they corresponded to social identities imagined along the binary categories of nationalist vs. cosmopolitan, religious vs. secular, traditional (or anti-modern) vs. modern, which could be translated into the opposition between the “first” and the “second” Serbia. The best education policies could do, then, was recognize and accommodate these divisions. However, this was not done out of reverence for their content or ultimate belief in either of the sets of values that they were thought to correspond to. Rather, the objective was to enlist the support of the widest possible spectrum of opinions in the Serbian public sphere, and to, if not provide consensus, then at least ensure there would be

no large-scale opposition to the policies of the new regime. In other words, rather than a means of change, education became an instrument of power.

Of course, this is not to claim that the architects of the education reform in communism were not motivated by political power. As we could see in the previous chapter, one of the main reasons for introducing vocation-oriented education was to curb the waves of social unrest happening at universities, which were being identified as major threats to the existing political order. However, this policy at least attempted to identify the structural causes of the crisis, and tried to intervene in what was perceived as its roots. On the other hand, instead of seeking to transform or transgress social cleavages, the introduction of religious and civic education was based on their explicit recognition, making the essentialist notions of social and cultural identities legitimate grounds for policymaking. While vocation-oriented education reform tried to address the sources of class conflict—by privileging the children of workers and farmers over the children of bureaucrats and intellectuals—religious and civic education reform subscribed to a weak multiculturalism by advocating rights based on the “historical” belonging to a particular faith or ethnic group. What we can observe in the policy discourse is a clear shift from the structure of social inequalities, which is constructed and, by definition, changeable (among other things, through education), to the politics of ethnic and religious differences, which are “inherited” and thus, by extension, fixed.

This is not to say that class is entirely absent from the education reforms in post-Milošević Serbia. If nothing else, as we could see from the analysis of the introduction of religious and civic education, the distinction between the “first” and the “second” Serbia is very much a class category. However, it is not (or at least not much) based on “objective” social differences: rather, it is one used by the bourgeois intellectual stratum, the “second *Bildungsbürgertum*,” in order to provide a source of “distinction” (in Bourdieu’s sense of the word) for their own values and practices. As such, its markers are based on sets of beliefs and behaviors that, although very much the product of socialization, are presented as “natural”: in the social distinctions of the 1990s, one is either a “peasant” or an “urbanite,” one either listens to turbo folk or to jazz. Preferences are fixed and unchangeable. In other words: class becomes conflated with identity.

The conflation of the politics of class with politics of identity is one of the most important markers of education policymaking in Serbia (and many other parts of former Yugoslavia) at the turn of the century. It is reflected in the fact that, by and large, policies that might address class differences tend to be clumsy, undifferentiated, and apolitical (such as the overarching “poverty reduction strategies”), hardly ever addressing the *causes* of poverty or other manifestations of class divisions. In comparison, policies that address identities abound: from those aimed at the Roma, women, children with special needs, refugees, to those aimed at ethnic and religious minorities. Although this is not to say that policies from the latter group are unnecessary, their agenda is fundamentally different. They rarely aim to identify the causes of oppression of the groups they claim to protect; they just attempt to give them recognition and/or representation in and through education, hoping that the remaining issues will solve themselves. In this sense, education is turned from a practice that seeks to transgress and transform, into a practice that can only recognize and accommodate what already exists out there.

The corollaries and consequences of this “identity turn” in education policy are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The chapter will deal with the struggles for the recognition of ethnic identities through higher education institutions in former Yugoslavia. It will look at how these demands interacted with the processes of ethno-political mobilization in the region, and how they were related to the dynamics of the conflict, as well as those of post-conflict development.

CHAPTER 4

Higher Education and Post-Conflict Development in Sandžak, Kosovo, and Macedonia

Introduction

The period of transition in the post-Yugoslav states brought in substantive changes in all arenas of policymaking. The policy environment also underwent important changes. The period of transition and, specifically, of post-conflict development, was (and still is) characterized by the growing influence of international and transnational actors and networks on policymaking. In the first place are frameworks and standards related to the EU accession (or European integration), which all of the post-Yugoslav states have identified as their political goal. Although, at the time of writing this book, only Slovenia and Croatia have actually acceded to the European Union, the political, economic, and social aspects of the accession process determine, to a large extent, the internal political dynamics of the successor states. Secondly, there are international financial institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank, which control loan conditions and the financial restructuring of these countries, and thus indirectly shape budgets and financial policies. Thirdly, there are international organizations that most of former Yugoslav republics are members of, such as the UN, Council of Europe, and the OSCE, which, through different channels, influence the development of policies, especially those related to democratization and post-conflict development.

Chandler described this changed context of policymaking in the contemporary world as the rise of “post-liberal governance” (2010, 2006). Post-liberal governance means that transnational actors exert increased influence on domestic policymaking through media such as the export of instruments of “good governance” and different forms of technical assistance. These are sometimes dependent on the countries fulfilling or committing to certain criteria, which most frequently have to do with the development of free market mechanisms, standards of human rights, or some combination of both. In the case of former Yugoslavia, their impact is most pronounced in the successor states that are effectively international protectorates, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. However, not unlike in other transitional countries, it is remarkably strong in other parts of former Yugoslavia as well.

The domain of education policy is not exempted from the impact of post-liberal governance. Although primary and secondary education is usually considered the exclusive responsibility of the nation-state, the turn of the millennium saw a profound change in the context of higher education. Namely, in June 1999, ministers in charge of higher education of 29 European countries met in Bologna and signed a declaration that committed to establish a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. This initiated a process of harmonization of degree structures, stimulation of mobility, and development of shared standards of quality among the signatories. Besides the signatory states, the process includes international organizations such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, European University Association (EUA), European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (ENQA), European Students’ Union (ESU), Education International (EI), European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), and BusinessEurope. In time, the Bologna Process developed institutional structures of its own, including the secretariat and follow-up groups, as well as biannual ministerial conferences where the impact of the process and individual countries’ performance are measured and compared.

The countries of the former Yugoslavia eagerly joined the process. Slovenia was among the original signatories in 1999, Croatia joined in 2001, while Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia (at the time as Serbia and Montenegro) all joined in 2003. Kosovo, due to its unresolved status, is not an official member, but its higher education is

to a high extent influenced and shaped by the Bologna policy developments. In all of these countries, the Bologna process—and the related initiatives, usually included in the umbrella term of “Europeanization” of higher education and research—are considered the most important policy drivers in the domain of higher education today (Vukasovic 2012). Most, if not all the reforms implemented in tertiary education in the post-Yugoslav states from 2000 onwards, were motivated or, at least, legitimized by references to the Bologna process. These reforms spanned a broad domain including legislation, governance of universities, funding, quality assurance, relationships between teaching and research, academic careers, and social services. Not surprisingly, acts of resistance provoked by the more neoliberal aspects of these reforms were frequently framed as “anti-Bologna” protests, (cf. Doolan 2011; Baćević 2010) although, in most cases, they had very little to do with the Bologna process as such.

One thing in which the Bologna process definitely succeeded is to establish European integration as the prime policy driver in higher education in the Western Balkans. Regardless of whether the evaluation is positive or negative, policymakers in the post-Yugoslav states today tend to frame higher education reforms almost exclusively in the context of the Bologna Process. Thus, the Bologna Process is presented not as a set of strategic decisions, but rather as a necessary step on the road to EU membership. Of course, this is a very arbitrary interpretation, as there is no causal link between participation in the Bologna Process and membership in the European Union; as a matter of fact, the participation in the Process is voluntary, and many of the participating countries are very far from the process of EU accession. This points to the need to establish a more critical perspective towards the construction of European integration as, on the one hand, synonymous with the Bologna Process, and, on the other, as the dominant, if not only, framework for the interpretation of the transformations of higher education in the successor states of former Yugoslavia.

Following this cue, this chapter will shift the focus away from the processes of “convergence” (e.g. Dobbins and Knill 2009) or “downloading” (e.g., Vukasovic 2012) that dominates the scholarship on the transformation of higher education policy in the successor states of former Yugoslavia, and tackle the less “visible” side of higher education reforms in the region. This side could perhaps be described as the

“reverse” of the processes of (European) integration: it concerns the “fragmentation” of higher education, or, more precisely, the trend of developing universities explicitly or implicitly aimed as specific ethnic, religious, or linguistic groups. Given that these processes are most frequently related to the dynamics of conflicts in former Yugoslavia, which, by themselves, were most frequently designated as ethnic (or ethnonationalist, or ethnoreligious), the institutions will be referred to as “ethnic universities,” though the reader should bear in mind that this designation by no means implies that they are ethnically “pure” in terms of students or staff. Rather, the designation “ethnic” denotes their relevance for or embeddedness within specific projects of ethnic mobilization, which sometimes had a defensive rather than an offensive character, and were frequently framed within the broader discourse of human and minority rights.

The examples of such institutional developments are abundant in the territory of former Yugoslavia. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the beginning of the conflict, two major universities divided along ethnic lines. Serb staff and students of the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia’s flagship institution of higher education, established a separate University of East Sarajevo in Pale, in 1992. Similarly, in Mostar, a mixed Croatian-Bosniak Muslim city, the Croatian part of the University of Mostar split off, forming a separate institution. For an outsider, it might prove a bit difficult to distinguish between them. Namely, the full name of the original institution is “University of Mostar Džemal Bijedić.” It was named after a communist politician and prime minister of SFRY from 1971–77, who contributed a lot to the development of his native city, and played a pivotal role in the establishment of a university in Mostar. The name of the Croatian institution is “Sveučilište u Mostaru,” being the Croatian word for “university.” Thus, both institutions essentially call themselves the University of Mostar, except that the Croatian word “sveučilište” clearly demarcates it from the Bosnian “univerzitet,” thus emphasizing the ethnolinguistic character of the division. Ethnic division of education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, of course, is not exceptional; it has become synonymous with the notorious concept of “two schools under one roof,” which literally means separate schools for children of different ethnic groups that still continue to share the same premises, inherited from the period before the war when it used to be a single school.

The phenomenon of “two universities in one,” however, did not remain exclusive to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Kosovo is another society where there are two universities that, although not sharing the location anymore, share the same name—or at least claims to it. After the NATO intervention in 1999, Serbian students and staff of the University of Prishtina fled the city, and in 2001 reestablished a university in the north part of Kosovo, in Kosovska Mitrovica/Mitrovicë. The full name of the institution today is “University of Priština temporarily located in Kosovska Mitrovica.” Similarly to the case of Mostar, the name is a marker of ethnic (or political) identity. Namely, the town in which the new university is located is situated in the Serb-majority area north of Kosovo in the part of town north of the river Ibar, mainly populated by Serbs. The southern part of the town is predominantly populated by Albanians. Serbs call the town Kosovska Mitrovica, in order to distinguish it from the town of Sremska Mitrovica, in the north of Serbia, thus symbolically expressing the position according to which Kosovo is part of Serbia. Albanians, on the other hand, call it Mitrovicë, and thus refer to the institution as the “University in Mitrovica.” On the other hand, when the Albanian staff and students returned to the premises of the university in Prishtina, they established it as the University of Prishtina, now one of two public universities in the framework of public higher education of the Republic of Kosovo.¹ Tensions between the two universities, not limited to the question of who is the legal successor and has the right to bear the name of the “University of Prishtina,” continue to this day.

Conflict and post-conflict dynamics played an important role in the development of higher education in Macedonia. In 1994, a local group of politicians in the Albanian-majority town of Tetovo founded the University of Tetovo, a private institution with Albanian-language teaching. The Macedonian government deemed the initiative unconstitutional, given it violated the regulation according to which Macedonian was the only language of instruction in higher education. The tensions resulted in a fatal incident at the opening ceremony when one Albanian was shot, and many more arrested. Despite this, the

¹ Kosovo declared independence in 2008. Serbia disputes the declaration and refers to it as Kosovo under UNSCR 1244.

University of Tetovo continued to operate as an “illegal” higher education institution. Meanwhile, in the framework of the “conflict prevention” mandate, representatives of the international community pressured the Macedonian government to enable Albanians to attend higher education in their native language. The efforts resulted in the development of a project for an institution with combined Albanian, Macedonian, and English-language teaching, brokered by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoep. However, the implementation of the plan was delayed by the outbreak of the conflict, widely understood as having “spilled over” from Kosovo (cf. Daftary 2001), between the Albanian National Liberation Army and the Macedonian police forces. The conflict was concluded by the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement in August 2001. The agreement established Macedonia as a consociational democracy whose two biggest ethnic groups, Macedonian Slavs and Albanians, sharing political power; incidentally, it also provided the necessary donor support for the completion of the project, and the South East European University in Tetovo was inaugurated in November 2001. On the other hand, the University of Tetovo continued to exist illegally until 2004, when the new provisions for ethnic and linguistic minorities enabled it to be recognized as the State University of Tetovo. The two universities now coexist in the same city, and presumably cater to the same population. However, their institutional “philosophies” and approaches to minority integration differ to a substantial degree.

The region of Sandžak, in the southwest of Serbia, has also become the home of two universities. Although Sandžak never experienced open ethnic conflict on the scale of those in Bosnia, Kosovo or even Macedonia, its predominantly Bosniak Muslim community has been subjected to repression and violence of both the Milošević regime and the neighboring forces of the Republika Srpska. Universities in Sandžak, however, did not develop during the 1990s. It was only in 2002, with the support of the government of Serbia’s Prime Minister Đinđić, that Mufti Zukorlić, at the time young and progressive religious leader, was allowed to establish a private university, calling it the International University in Novi Pazar. Soon afterwards, in 2005, another institution named The State University of Novi Pazar was established in the same town. Two universities are in bitter rivalry, but they continue to exist in the same place, using the same language

of instruction, and competing for the same pool of students. They are affiliated with opposing political forces, and thus their conflict is not limited to competition related to higher education, but rather stretches deeper into the dynamics of ethnic and religious relationships within Sandžak, as well as between Sandžak and Serbia.

In sum, during the first decade of the 21st century, higher education in the post-Yugoslav states has been developing along, one could say, a “dual” path. On the one hand, the Bologna process and the related processes of “Europeanization” have put emphasis on integration and convergence, not only within the post-Yugoslav space, but also the whole of Europe. Although some authors (e.g., Jarab 2008; Kwiek 2004) have noted the specific challenges these processes put in front of higher education systems in Central and Eastern, as opposed to the rest of Europe, the intellectual production in former Yugoslavia has, for the most part, remained limited to either describing aspects and phases of the introduction of these changes, or, at best, identifying obstacles or challenges in their implementation. In other words, there has been relatively little consideration of how the specific aspects of political, social, and economic transformation(s) of the post-Yugoslav states are impacting and interacting with the processes of change in higher education. The development of “ethnic” universities, for instance, is a prime example of the interaction between the political dynamics and higher education.

On the other hand, when these institutions are discussed, this usually happens in the context of conflict prevention, resolution, or post-conflict development—depending on the point in time and dynamics of the specific environment. Within this framework, “ethnic” higher education is most frequently framed in the concept of right of minorities to access higher education in their mother tongue. Although the question itself is very interesting, both in the context of political philosophy and in the context of policy, the complexity of its implications means that, for the time being at least, it remains at the level of “recommendation,” but is not considered—at least not in Europe—to be a fundamental right. This also means that there are no shared standards or universally acknowledged “models” for minority higher education; the solutions vary from case to case, between as frequently as within countries.

This variation, however, does not mean that the development of higher education in post-conflict contexts is entirely in the domain of

national policymaking. On the contrary, in all of the contexts described earlier—Bosnia, Kosovo, Sandžak, and Macedonia—international and transnational actors play a role, sometimes as more distant evaluators of human rights standards (as, for instance, the ICG in Sandžak), sometimes as directly involved players who do not only support or help implement but also design and suggest institutional solutions (e.g., the OSCE in Macedonia). In this sense, the development of universities in the divided societies of former Yugoslavia fits Chandler's paradigm of post-liberal governance. On the other hand, however, a literal application of post-liberal governance would mean that the space for the acting of local actors is very limited, in many cases effectively constrained to the implementation of policies designed "abroad." This would entail ignoring the extent to which the development of universities in the divided societies of former Yugoslavia was driven from "below," by the actors on the ground—from the academics to the politicians. Although international actors play a significant role in policymaking, domestic (local) actors also utilize the divided and/or post-conflict context in order to pursue specific agendas.

Particularly useful in understanding this context is Gramsci's concept of "passive revolutions" (Gramsci 1999 [1971]; McCarthy 2011). This concept assumes that local elites use externally validated reforms as a "cover" for pushing their own goals. This does not mean, however, that external actors have no agency, but rather that specific institutional configurations are the results of the tensions and process of negotiation that involve "external" and "internal," international as well as local, foreign as well as domestic actors. This also means that understanding the development of "ethnic" institutions requires a careful reconstruction of these processes. It calls for an identification of different ideas and concepts of rights, justice, community, inter-ethnic relations, as well as (ultimately) understandings of what is the role of higher education in post-conflict contexts embedded in these institutions, before we can judge their impacts, implications, or likely trajectories of future development.

The objective of this chapter, thus, is to reconstruct the processes of higher education development in the post-conflict societies of former Yugoslavia that result in institutional configurations such as "two universities in one." The chapter will focus on the cases of Kosovo, Macedonia, and Sandžak, since they have received, compara-

tively, less attention than the more (in)famous cases from Bosnia and Herzegovina. This does not imply, however, that the universities in Mostar and Sarajevo are not important or relevant for understanding the interaction between higher education and post-conflict societies; however, the administrative complexity related to the multiple and overlapping layers of governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina (canton, entity, and state) means that these cases would warrant a separate study. Before moving on to the case studies, however, the chapter will first consider possible explanations for the development of “ethnic universities” in these contexts; in other words, it will examine the general policy rationales that could have driven these decisions.

4.1. Post-Conflict Higher Education: A Policy Paradox?

How to explain the development of “two-in-one” universities in the multiethnic, divided societies of former Yugoslavia? If we look at policy drivers, there are a number of reasons why these universities could have developed in these environments. One of the most frequent justifications for the expansion of universities is economic development (Trnavcevic 2010; Robertson et al. 2007; Smith and Vaux 2003). One side of this argument is that universities help boost regional development because the concentration of students also leads to the expansion of related services—housing, catering, transport, etc. In this context, the mere existence of a university can be a driver of local development. In a related, and broader sense, the role of higher education in economic development is connected with raising employment, living standards, and social cohesion, the outcomes usually framed within the concept of “human capital,” which sees investment in human development—and thus, in education—as part of the broader project of economic development.

Although this line of reasoning has not been entirely absent from the discourses surrounding the post-conflict universities in former Yugoslavia, it is hardly reflected in the institutional configuration and programs of these institutions. To begin with, the existence of two universities in the same town can hardly be justified by economic reasons. Secondly, and more importantly, the majority of these institutions

focus on programs in the social sciences and humanities, and not on disciplines traditionally connected with regional development, such as mining, agriculture, tourism, and water management. Investing in short cycle vocational training education, which could presumably provide the workforce necessary to restart the local production, would have made much more sense in this context both from the perspective of employment and regional development. However, in most of these cases the local actors virtually insisted on the relevance of social sciences and humanities, and either explicitly refused to consider other educational profiles, or included them in addition to the already existing ones.

Another interpretation for the development of “ethnic” universities, especially related to the perceived roles of social sciences and humanities, is that they serve the identity-building projects of particular ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups. This idea is embedded in the European notion of the university as a vital institution for the development of the cultural “canon” of shared ideas and values, and thus for the creation of a nation-state (e.g., Kwiek 2006; Ruegg 2004; Neave 2000). The opposition to the development of what would eventually become “ethnic” universities throughout former Yugoslavia was usually founded on this assumption, namely, that the development of institutions that explicitly catered to minorities would be the first step toward the separation of the said group and establishment of a new state. However, while correctly identifying the role of ethnic politics in the development of these universities, this thesis fails to account for the existence of *not one but two* institutions presumably serving the identity projects of the same group. This is the case in Macedonia and Sandžak, where two universities catering to, respectively, Albanians and Bosniak Muslims, appear in the same place. Equally, this explanation overlooks the fact that some of these institutions were developed within the framework of the state, and can thus hardly be considered “separatist.” Although the role and use of minority rights as well as broader identity-based claims in education policies is one of the key aspects of this book, the challenge is to understand how these are framed and translated into political agendas and policy proposals in specific contexts, resulting in different institutional configurations, rather than to assume that similar institutional configurations automatically presuppose similar policy rationales.

Of course, it is possible to interpret the development of higher education in the post-conflict regions of former Yugoslavia purely as the consequence of increasing demand. The trend of massification of higher education has been present even before the dissolution, and continued after the wars of the 1990s. Partly, it took place through the existing institutions, but partly it was aided by the “liberalization” of higher education provision, which enabled the development of private universities. Although private higher education in former Yugoslavia never reached the scale of that in some other former communist countries, most notably Poland (cf. Kwiek 2004), students in the former Yugoslav republics were nevertheless able to obtain higher education outside of the state-financed institutions. In this context, some of the universities analyzed in this chapter could be understood as private answers to the needs that the public system was not satisfying. However, this explanation could still not account for the fact that some of the “ethnic” universities are, in fact, public (or publicly financed), nor for the fact that, in some cases, there are both public and private universities in the same location, catering to the same minority. Thus, again, purely “economic” rationales seem to not be sufficient to explain these institutional configurations.

Finally, it would be possible to imagine the function of these institutions in the context of reconciliation. This interpretation would rely on the idea that universities teach students to overcome stereotypes and prejudice toward members of other groups, and to approach issues related to interethnic relations in the region from a critical distance (e.g., Trnavcevic 2010, 101). In this perspective, higher education institutions can have an active role in overcoming the legacy of the conflicts, through engaging in a variety of activities, from teaching and research to outreach. However, again, the reality does not seem to fit this picture. Only one of the institutions described here, the South East European University in Tetovo, has multiculturalism explicitly built into its mission (cf. Bacevic 2011). Some of the other institutions remain relatively neutral to the issue of diversity, and others are more or less explicitly targeting only one ethnic, religious, or linguistic group (ibid.). Finally, literally none of the existing institutions have specific teaching, research, or outreach activities that aim to critically engage with the legacy of the conflicts. Their cooperation across ethnic cleavages is either non-existing or very limited.

In sum, none of the general approaches seem to offer a satisfactory explanation for the number and variety of higher education institutions in the region. Their existence cannot be justified by purely economic rationales, as both their impact on the economy and the student demand seem to be insufficient. On the other hand, their political roles seem neither to fit the framework of “nation-building” nor “post-conflict reconciliation” commonly associated universities in similar environments. Is post-conflict higher education, thus, a policy paradox?

Underlining the argument from the preceding chapters, this part of the book asserts that “two-in-one” universities can be understood as a consequence of specific social and political dynamics. Although the universities described in this chapter all originate in the general post-conflict framework of the Western Balkans, their missions, visions, and institutional profiles differ, hinting at the need to understand the interaction between their development and the evolution of respective political contexts. This implies that understanding how they came to be requires the reconstruction of the specific strategies and rationales of different actors who participated in their development, as well as the ways in which these became translated into institutional structures and discourses.

This chapter will reconstruct the development of universities in post-conflict societies in Kosovo, Sandžak, and Macedonia. It relies on the techniques of process tracing (e.g., George and Bennett 2005; Mahoney 2000) and discursive institutionalism (Schmidt 2010, 2008), in order to show the ways in which social and political dynamics interacted with the agendas of different actors, evolving, over time, into specific institutional configurations. Focusing on the causal mechanisms that led to the development of these configurations, the chapter will also briefly discuss their possible evolution in the future. The conclusion will summarize and compare these developments, offering some implications for the understanding of the political and societal dynamics that shape education policies in post-conflict, divided societies.

4.2. Kosovo: Education at War

The development of higher education in Kosovo represents, perhaps, the clearest case of interaction between education policies and identity politics. The early days of higher education in Kosovo, as described

in Chapter 2 of this book, are inextricably linked to the ways in which the communist regime in Belgrade approached the issue of ethnic Albanian mobilization around the political status of the province, as well as, more specifically, the ways in which education and other public policies at the time accommodated minority rights. The ensuing development in this sphere, thus, can be seen as the function of the relationship between the two dominant ethnic groups—Albanians and Serbs—and the deepening social rift that continues in present-day Kosovo.

4.2.1. The early years: from 1968 to 1990

The protests in Kosovo in 1968 included the demand for establishing a separate university. To Tito's regime this may have come as a surprise, but it was not impossible to fulfill. Within the cluster of ethnic Albanians' demands, which included the status of republic and right to secession for the province of Kosovo, a university would have probably been not only the easiest to accommodate, but also the least threatening to the federation. The regime was in the process of building an Albanian-speaking intelligentsia in Kosovo; providing an autonomous institution with higher education in their mother tongue was a small price to pay in exchange for the development of a loyal indigenous elite. Thus, the University of Prishtina was established in 1969.

The calculation, however, was wrong in the assumption that the establishment of a university would result in the development of not only a loyal, but also an integrated Albanian-speaking population. When the University of Prishtina was inaugurated, the central education authorities in Belgrade provided the institutional structure and funding, but little more. Curricula, textbooks and, not least importantly, teachers had to be "imported" from the neighboring Albania (Dragnich and Todorovich 1984, 164–65; Vickers 1998, 176). Although this was largely a practical solution emanating from the lack of "indigenous" (Kosovo-born) Albanian intellectuals, it had long-lasting consequences for the integration of university graduates. The university focused on the types of programs that were seen as prestigious and essential for the development of the national identity of the Albanian ethnic group—such as (Albanian) language and literature, social sciences and humanities, economy and law—but dedicated very

little space to technical sciences, at the time deemed necessary for the development of the province (Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011; Vladislavljëvic 2008, 83; Kostovicova 2005, 42–43). The textbooks and curricula imported from Albania meant that students were frequently learning a different professional vocabulary from the one used in other Yugoslav republics at the time (cf. Wickers 1998, 176–178). Although Albanian-speaking students were required to learn Serbo-Croatian—the official language of the state—in primary and secondary school, having tertiary education in Albanian did not stimulate the attainment of skills in Serbo-Croatian and thus also closed off a number of possible employment venues, not least those in state administration. Serbian-speaking students, likewise, learned no or very little Albanian. Although the University of Prishtina was obliged to provide a portion of programs taught in Serbo-Croatian, rather than developing a useful mix between the two languages spoken in the province, the structure of programs at the university started to resemble the deepening rift between the two ethnic groups: Serbian students were attending Serbian-language programs, and Albanian students were attending those in the Albanian language.

Unsurprisingly, the Slavic-speaking population began to see the growing reflection of the Albanian national sentiment in education and culture as the “Albanianization” of the public sphere, and, eventually, also as a disadvantage in the labor market. Vickers writes:

The new [1974] constitution emphasized equalities and equal rights and duties. These included the right to the development and free expression of the national language, culture and history, and its recognition precipitated two trends: a spate of translations, normally from Serbo-Croat, and the demand by employers for knowledge of both Albanian and Serbo-Croat in workplaces, even where this was not actually required...[the trend] received official sanction from the League of Communists of Kosovo and the educational and cultural authorities, including Pristina University. The new policy placed the Serb and Montenegrin nationality group as a whole at a great disadvantage, since only a few from this group spoke both Serbo-Croat and Albanian. Many members of the Serb-Montenegrin nationality group began sending their children to school outside the province because

of alleged nationalistic pressure and the schools' new language equality rules. (Vickers 1998, 180)

Rather than contributing to integration, then, the education reforms actually exacerbated the divisions between the Albanian and Serbo-Croatian speaking populations in Kosovo. Tensions and hostilities were growing, and violent incidents became more frequent. At the University of Zagreb, an Albanian student was killed in a skirmish that erupted after an evening dedicated to Albanian folklore; at the University of Prishtina, Albanian-speaking students refused to attend classes taught in Serbo-Croatian.

In 1981, less than a year after Tito's death, protests erupted at the University of Prishtina. Ostensibly, crowded dormitories and bad food in the canteen were triggers for protests; however, in the atmosphere of increasing divisions, they inevitably assumed political undertones (Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011). Riot police intervened, but the protest resumed within weeks, spreading to other main towns in the province, involving the students, workers, peasants, and even some officials; this time, there was a substantial degree of violence against the Serbs and Montenegrins in the area (Vickers 1998, 197). The police deployed tanks to stabilize the riots, killing—depending on the source—between ten and one thousand people. A curfew was imposed, and the province came to a virtual standstill. The final demonstration was held on May 18, when students occupied the dormitories and were dispersed by the police using tear gas (cf. Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011, 72–73). The Serbian authorities closed down the University, dissolved the university council, imposed a “mandatory administration,” and ordered all students to return to their homes (Vickers 1998, 199).

The media were quick to draw a link between the University of Prishtina and the riots. The University was accused of being a “hotbed” of Albanian nationalism. The massification of higher education in Kosovo was described as “disproportionate,” both in comparison to the rest of the country, and in relation to the employment prospects. The regime had founded the University of Prishtina in order to appease the Albanian nationalist and separatist sentiments within the province: “At the time [of the riots], the University had an enrolment of 36,000 full-time students, and 18,000 more in extension study programmes (...) The doors of the education had been thrown wide

open, partly as a stop-gap to lighten the unemployment problem; the authorities reasoned that it was better to have youth in the classroom than roaming the streets” (Vickers 1998, 197). However, it seemed like the plan had turned against them. In a longer article published late in 1981, the influential Croatian daily “Vjesnik” gives an interpretation of “what is wrong” with research being conducted at the University of Prishtina:

Even a superficial analysis of the titles of MA and doctoral theses is sufficient to reveal that the majority is in historical, linguistic, and other social sciences or humanities. Most of these deal with the past and national history, and often only in a descriptive way...the consequences of such an approach are more than present today. Obviously, a significant portion of researchers in Kosovo are looking centuries behind. History, of course, should be revealed and its positive examples recounted to the new generations, but it is almost unbelievable that none of these works are about our socialist self-managed reality, the international workers’ movement, or the non-aligned movement. (“Opsjednutost prošlošću,” 7 December 1981)

The conclusion was that the university in Kosovo was not succeeding in producing loyal cadres who would be interpreting national history in the politically legitimate way. Not only had the university failed to fulfill this purpose, but it also seemed to contribute to the political mobilization of ethnic Albanians against the official state policy (cf. Sommers and Buckland 2004). This was when the policy of the centralization, or, in more ethnically charged terms, “Serbianization” of the university began.

This development overlapped with the escalation of tensions on the political level in the province. Local politicians, including over 1,000 members of the League of Communists, were sentenced and imprisoned in the aftermath of the riots. There were incidents in which Serb churches, cemeteries, and monuments were defaced and destroyed. In turn, the grip of the Central Committee of the League of Communists over forms of Albanian political organization tightened (cf. Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011, 74). Finally, the amendments to the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Serbia in March 1989,

which annulled the provisions of the 1974 Constitution, effectively stripped Kosovo of its autonomy. The ensuing violent protests left at least twenty-eight dead. A state of emergency was declared in Kosovo.

In June that same year, the celebration of the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, in retrospect interpreted as the rallying point for the supporters of Slobodan Milošević's politics and the public announcement of the nationalist tendencies in Serbia, took place in Gazimestan. In 1990, Serbia dissolved Kosovo's parliament, now effectively removing even the pretense of democratic or autonomous decision-making for the province. The new constitution, this time of "rump" Yugoslavia, defined Kosovo (which was again, in reversal of the provisions of the 1974 Constitution, renamed "Kosovo and Metohija") and Vojvodina as regions within Serbia. In this constitution, ethnic minorities were guaranteed the official use of and education in their mother tongue (Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011, 245), but this was as far as minority rights went, and often only on paper. The government introduced "emergency measures" that included the dismissal of a large number of ethnic Albanians from their jobs and positions. As the dissolution of Yugoslavia began to unravel at an ever-quickenening and more violent pace, the stage was set for the effective separation of the two largest ethnic groups in Kosovo.

4.2.2. Parallel worlds, parallel systems

The project of the Serbian "re-nationalization" of Kosovo relied to a significant extent on education policy. In August 1990, the Parliament introduced new curricula, which significantly increased the number of hours stipulated for instruction on Serbian history and culture, while reducing Albanian language, history, and literature to a minimum. Vickers (1998, 247–48) writes that "[n]ew regulations for enrollment with a quota that gave preference to the Serbian population also took effect. Albanian pupils were not allowed to enroll in secondary school unless they passed examinations in Serbian language and literature, which only a small percentage managed to do."

The hardest attack, expectedly, was to be on the university. In 1991, the government in Belgrade announced that, from the academic year 1991/92, Albanian students would not be allowed to register at the University of Prishtina. Armed police guarded the university

buildings, dormitories, laboratories, and libraries. The new Law on Higher Education, adopted in 1992, allowed for instruction in a minority language only with prior consent of the university board; with institutional structures in which Serbs were increasingly replacing Albanians, this was not very likely to happen (Vickers 1998; Tahirsylaj 2010).

Albanians responded to the growing pressure by developing what is commonly known as “parallel institutions”—underground networks that functioned independently of the Serb-dominated public services. University education was focused on consultations, with lectures taking place in makeshift facilities, often in adapted private apartments, storage rooms, or garages. The Serbian administration refused to yield any space for the education of Albanians until they agreed to endorse the Serbian curriculum, and sporadically raided the “illegal” classes, confiscating textbooks and teaching material (Vickers 1998, 271–75). This period also marked the beginning of a more systematic use of force by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), and the tightening of its links with the “parallel” university (KLA leader, and later Prime Minister of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, was the Vice-Rector of the underground university in Prishtina). Both Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo were becoming increasingly radicalized, especially as living conditions grew more difficult. Two ethnic groups literally inhabited parallel worlds (cf. Sommers and Buckland 2004). It became clear that the situation was not sustainable.

4.2.3. The Milošević–Rugova agreement

A small breakthrough happened in 1996, when representatives of the Catholic community of St. Egidio, known for its mediation skills, managed to broker a deal between the Serbian and Albanian leadership, at the time represented, respectively, by Slobodan Milošević, then the President of Serbia, and Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the League for Democratic Kosovo. The agreement was to result in the restoration of the education system in Kosovo (Vickers 1998, 305). However, it did not specify any issues related to practical organization, funding, and curricula, leaving it to expert groups. Although the incident in 1997, when an exploding car bomb injured the Serbian Rector of the University of Prishtina, Radivoje Papović, seriously jeopardized the

process (*ibid.*, 306), expert groups did manage to reach an agreement in 1998. According to this agreement, Albanian and Serb students were supposed to attend classes on the same university premises, but in strictly separate “shifts”: one group would go in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Despite obviously perpetuating the problem of “parallelism” and segregation in the public life, the agreement was praised by both international negotiators and the pro-reform strands in the country: it seemed like a solution to the absence of a logistical framework for the higher education of Albanian students, while being politically acceptable to the Serbian side.

The latter, however, turned out not to be completely true. Rector Papović, as well as leadership and students of the University of Prishtina, called the agreement as a “betrayal of Serb interests in Kosovo” and refused to abide by it. Papović was quoted saying: “The introduction of teaching in Albanian at the University of Prishtina is an indirect way of giving Albanians a recognition of nationhood; this was anyhow the goal of their struggle. They fought for the education institutions because they wanted the status of a nation, not for education itself...”.²

It is obvious that the Serbian leadership of the University of Prishtina, at the time, was equating educational rights with the project of nation-building—the project which, in the case of the Albanian nation, they saw as dangerous and sought to prevent. However, their protest was at odds with the official state policy of Serbia, which, at the time, was focused on the attempts to prevent international intervention by demonstrating the commitment to at least minimal human rights standards in Kosovo. Serbian politicians from Belgrade were keen on implementing the “Milošević–Rugova” agreement in order to show the international community that they were capable of handling the situation in Kosovo. Consequently, a state delegation was sent from Belgrade to the University of Prishtina to try to convince the demonstrators to accept the agreement. However, according to multiple sources, the visit ended with the delegation having to jump out of the window of the rectorate in order to escape the enraged crowd. The authorities in Belgrade were not happy: the then-spokesperson of Serbia’s ruling

² Nikolić, Olga *Gvozdeni rektor u “svetoj” zemlji*. Belgrade: Naša Borba. [The iron rector in “Holy” Land]. http://www.yurope.com/nasa-borba/arhiva/Apr98/0504/0504_9.HTM (accessed on 03/16/2013).

party, Ivica Dačić, said: "Anyone against the Agreement on the normalization of education in Kosovo is directly contravening the state and national interests of Serbia. These attacks and discontent originate in the lack of understanding for the essence of the Agreement, which, in fact, represents a defeat of separatism and a victory of reintegration" (Nikolić 1998)

What the "victory of reintegration" meant, however, was further specified by Vojislav Šešelj, the leader of the ultra-nationalist Radical Party, who, at the time, had just assumed the post of prime minister. "Personally, I think that that agreement does more harm to the Albanian national minority than to the Serbs. Albanians are themselves inviting a policy of apartheid with this insistence on separate education, on doing everything separately. [They want] to isolate themselves from the society and the system. Currently, the position of the government is to let them use the premises, and nothing more" (Nikolić 1998).

Although it would merit a longer comment that the prime minister apparently failed to observe that the policy of apartheid (state-imposed at least as much as self-imposed) had at that time already been in place for almost a decade, even more striking is the way in which the Serbian government at the time interpreted the concept of integration. From both comments, it is obvious that the issue was completely stripped of any but the most technical meaning: it began and stopped at the question of access to premises. The idea of integration as joint living, and not just existence side by side, was apparently already abandoned. The government implemented the solution in a technocratic manner: "disobedient" Rector Papović was replaced, and the premises of the University of Prishtina strictly separated between the Albanian, Serb, and Turkish communities. The solution, however, did not last long. The steady deterioration of the situation in Kosovo, including the massacre in the village of Račak early in 1999, contributed to the shifting of the international opinion toward NATO intervention in Kosovo.

The development of education policy in Kosovo during the second half of the twentieth century seems to have originated and ended in a conflict. In the beginning, the conflict was over the rights of a certain group to have access to higher education in a mother tongue. In the end, the conflict became "ethnic" and thus "seeped" into virtually all spheres of the society (cf. Horowitz 2000), making a violent resolution appear inevitable.

Throughout the period, the government tried reducing the issue to a series of technical questions: whether Albanian students and teachers can access the premises of the University of Prishtina, whether children speak Serbian well enough to be enrolled into secondary school, and whether there are sufficient places in the dormitories. However, behind these issues was a broader policy aimed at the containment of ethnic differences. After the “experiment” with the University of Prishtina failed to prevent further ethnic mobilization of Kosovo Albanians, state education policy became more aggressively “integrationist,” meaning effectively Serb-centered. As a consequence, Albanians withdrew from the public sphere, developing “parallel” institutions in place of the Serb-controlled ones. Attempts at a resolution that happened during this time, such as the Milošević–Rugova agreement, did nothing to transform the dynamics of the ensuing conflict, focusing again on technical issues related to the ownership over space—in this case, the premises of the University of Prishtina. Thus, nothing prevented the politics of space from becoming conflated with the issues of identity (Kostovicova 2005). In this sense, education could not but become a part of the territorial conflict between the two dominant ethnic groups.

4.2.4. After 1999

The period after the NATO intervention was also decisively marked by the contestation of the ownership over space—symbolic and literal. On the Serbian side, the emphasis was on the resistance to ethnic Albanian “ownership” of the education system, while the Albanian side commenced the consolidation of the education system within the newly established political configuration, and thus strove to “contain” the Serb higher education in its framework.

Most of the Serbian students and staff at the University of Prishtina fled the city during or soon after the intervention, abandoning the buildings, as well as most of the documentation, including student records. After the end of the intervention, Albanian staff and students returned to (or took over, depending on the terminology one prefers) the buildings of the University of Prishtina. During a brief period, it appeared like a form of “joint occupancy” might develop, but extremist attitudes on both sides rendered it effectively impossible (Den Berg and van der Boer 2011, 74–75). Serb students and staff

ended up scattered in makeshift buildings and other universities in the southern part of Serbia. Essentially, the situation bore an uncanny resemblance to the state of higher education in Kosovo before the war, except that the roles were reversed: Albanians now occupied the main public institutions, while Serbs were reduced to a “parallel system” of institutions with limited technical capacities (cf. Woeber 2006, 13).

Of course, one pronounced difference was that Serb institutions still functioned within the powerful system of public institutions in the Republic of Serbia. This also meant that they were in the framework of Serbian public administration and policymaking, which implied that their development would, to a high degree, depend on the internal political dynamics in Serbia. In this context, it is not surprising that the first substantial developments in the relationship between Serb and Albanian higher education institutions in Kosovo took place after the regime change in Serbia in October 2000.

The new Serbian Ministry of Education started developing plans for the gradual return of most of the faculties (constituent parts of the university) to Kosovo. A number of buildings in the predominantly Serb-populated north were refurbished for this purpose (“Seoba studente” September 6, 2001). The initiative encountered opposition from a part of professors and students who wanted to remain in Serbia. However, the Ministry remained convinced that the “displaced” faculties should return to Kosovo, especially since the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), officially in charge of administrating Kosovo’s education system since the Kumanovo agreement, indicated that it might be willing to financially support this process (ibid.). The Ministry also appointed a new rector, Gojko Savić, a non-party figure and thus acceptable to all the coalition partners.

The ensuing period was marked by the parallel consolidation of two universities. One was the successor of the (Serbian) University of Prishtina, located in Kosovska Mitrovica, the major mining town in the north of Kosovo, whose northern side was predominantly populated by Serbs. The other was located in the premises of the University of Prishtina, where the Albanian students and staff returned from the previous “parallel institutions” (cf. Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011). Legally, both universities could thus claim the name of the University of Prishtina (cf. Pupovci 2006). After repeated negotiations, it was finally agreed that the Serbian institution would assume the name

“University of Prishtina temporarily located in Kosovska Mitrovica”—which seemed to indicate that the university might eventually return to Prishtina.³

The international administration, headed by UNMIK’s Transitional Administrative Department (later the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government) of Education, Science, and Technology, whose chief at the time was Michael Daxner, showed a keen interest in both institutions. The University of Prishtina in Kosovska Mitrovica (UPKM) was seen as the potential solution to the “issue” of higher education for minorities in Kosovo (cf. Daxner 2004). International administrators invested substantial efforts into integrating it into the education system in Kosovo, chiefly through funding, but also through systems of quality assurance and other policy instruments that aimed to include the institution in a broader framework, potentially circumventing the political aspect (cf. Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011). However, the Serbian government was not prepared to cede control of the university to international administration. Both the funding and governance of UPKM were still tied to the state framework of Serbia, especially given that the controversial 1998 Universities Act, which remained in power until 2002, had fundamentally stripped universities of much of their autonomy. Politically, this put the UPKM in a rather uneasy position of having to balance between the Serbian government and the international administration in Kosovo. Financially, however, the period was rather successful. The liberal government in Belgrade financed UPKM’s basic needs, and asked little in return; the UNMIK administration covered everything else, as long as the university in principle agreed to integration into the higher education system of Kosovo.

At the same time, the international administration devoted substantial attention to the transformation of the University of Prishtina

³ The institution, however, is not entirely consistent in its name use. For instance, while undergoing the evaluation of the European University Association in 2008, which was seen as a sign of quality, the university agreed to the name “University in Kosovska Mitrovica” and is mentioned as such in the documentation. However, soon after the evaluation was finished, the university resumed the name “University of Prishtina temporarily located in Kosovska Mitrovica.” Thus, in this book, the abbreviation UPKM will be used.

(UP) from an institution that had essentially been a guerilla-type, parallel university, to a functioning institution of higher education that would satisfy (or, at least, satisfy) international standards (cf. Walker and Epp 2010; Woeber 2006, 12). Between 2000 and 2004, the emphasis of education policy reform in Kosovo was on designing higher education legislation informed by the trends in higher education policy in Europe, in particular the Bologna process (Ross Epp and Epp 2010). In this sense, “European standards” were seen as the policy driver that would enable the transition from an “underdeveloped,” problem-ridden education system to a high-quality one (cf. Woeber 2006). Walker and Epp elaborated this vision: “The vision for a post-war Kosovo established by the United Nations called for a peaceful transition to a pluralistic democracy and a market economy. Success would depend upon development of the skills, talents, and knowledge of the population (the youngest in Europe), and upon broad acceptance of the values of equality, tolerance, and respect for difference, human rights, and justice. Clearly education had a vital role in this transformation of Kosovo society” (Walker and Epp 2010, 105).

This approach, of course, almost completely ignored the political and social dynamics on the ground. Bache and Taylor (2003, 289–90), for instance, describe what they refer to as “policy resistance” to a British Council-funded program whose purpose was to help establish and develop curricula for the departments of social sciences at the UP. Equally, Walker and Epp (2010) describe the reactions to reform of teacher education as “resistance.” However, what transpires from the analyses is that what they encountered, in fact, was the legacy of the ethnic and political contestations over the role of higher education:

Creating a University in Kosovo that would be capable of entering the European H[igher] E[ducation] mainstream would inevitably create conflict because ‘the older generation will insist on a national curriculum including national history and music. Current ministry officials will be doubtful...[others] would strive for an international balance looking outward to the rest of Europe and the Western World’ (British Council 2000: Appendix 20, para. 8.22). There would also be problems integrating the formal and informal parallel systems of education and then

securing implementation of UNMIK's vision of a multi-ethnic, pluralist, liberal university based on the Western model." (Bache and Taylor 2003, 290)

The phase of institutional consolidation at the University of Prishtina was marked by the processes and tensions related to the attempts of the international administrative and donor community to adapt the higher education system of Kosovo to its own standards, or, as Bache and Taylor (2003, 291) put it, "along Western lines." In this sense, it fits well within Chandler's (2010) "post-liberal governance" framework. Namely, the emphasis during this period had been on the transfer of "best practices" and "principles of good governance," which aimed to transform the structure of higher education without necessarily tackling the complicated political framework. In a manner of speaking, it was similar to the logic of the Ahtisaari Comprehensive Status Settlement, a proposal for the resolution of the Kosovo–Serbia dispute introduced in 2007: standards before status. It focused on technical aspects of the reform, while leaving the political issues—including the legacy of the conflict—behind.

The leadership at the University of Prishtina itself showed very little incentive to transform it into the "multi-ethnic, pluralist, liberal university" of the UNMIK model. Given its history as a "parallel" institution, and the fact that most of its staff and students were involved in the fight against the dominance of the Serbian language in the institution, the period following NATO intervention was not likely to result in anything but the reassertion of the University's Albanian "character" (Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011, 74). Sommers and Buckland (2004, 46) agree: "Both the parallel Albanian and the formal Serb system were promoting Serb and Albanian nationalism, which would later make it difficult for the UN to build an education system based on inclusiveness." Certain international organizations made efforts to offer scholarships for members of ethnic minorities for studying at the University of Prishtina, but, not surprisingly, few Serbs ever applied (cf. Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011, 75). With time, thus, the "multicultural dream" of the University of Prishtina was abandoned; everyone, including the international administration, had accepted it as primarily an Albanian institution (Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011; Pupovci 2006; Woeber 2006).

The hopes thus shifted to the University of Prishtina in Kosovska Mitrovica, as the institution that could provide the “multicultural” dimension to higher education in Kosovo. Of course, this did not mean that anyone expected Albanians would start enrolling at the UPKM, but that the university could “cover” higher education in the Serbian language, and thus contribute to the standard of minority rights the international community was attempting to introduce (Daxner 2004). The high hopes invested in the UPKM reflected the way in which the provisional institutions of self-government approached its legal status. Although the Assembly of Kosovo and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) were reluctant to include guarantees for higher education in minority languages into the Law on Higher Education that was being drafted in 2002, the Special Representative to the Secretary General of the United Nations issued a one-sided regulation introducing an article to this effect. At the same time, the UNMIK administration decided to extend accreditation to the UPKM, although referring to in the document as the “University of Mitrovica” (cf. Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011, 80–81).

Between 2001 and 2004, the University of Prishtina and the University of Prishtina in Kosovska Mitrovica thus developed into a sort of implicit alliance. UPKM was recognized by the international administration as the institution providing higher education for Serbs in Kosovo, while the task of the UP was primarily framed in the context of providing higher education for the majority Albanian population. Whether this arrangement would eventually have developed into a form of educational “power-sharing,” remains in the domain of speculation. Namely, after the assassination of the Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in 2003, and the change of government in 2004, the Serbian approach to the issue of higher education in Kosovo changed as well.

4.2.5. From 2004 to independence

In April 2004, the Serbian parliament dismissed Gojko Savić, the rector of the University in Kosovska Mitrovica, replacing him with Papović, the rector of the University of Prishtina at the time of the 1996 protests, who, at the time, staunchly opposed sharing the university premises with Albanian students and staff. The move came

as a surprise to the leadership of the university, but also to the international community in Kosovo: Savić was recognized as a “cooperative” rector who could be counted on in the process of the integration of Serbian higher education in Kosovo. According to some sources, this would have rendered him problematic for the hardline nationalists both in Serbia and in the north of Kosovo, who refused any cooperation with Albanian institutions, particularly after the eruption of violence against Serbs in Kosovo in March 2004. Either way, the dismissal of Savić and the installation of Papović confirmed the turn toward a more nationalist orientation in Serbia, and the further divisions between Serbs in the north and the local governance structures in the rest of Kosovo.

Between 2004 and 2008, parallel education systems continued developing without even a pretense of complementarity. Serbian higher education institutions, including UPKM, functioned according to the Serbian Law on Higher Education, with teaching exclusively in Serbian and very little interaction with Kosovo’s institutions. The UPKM was funded from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, but under special provisions, which enabled the teaching and administrative staff to receive the equivalent of 150–200 percent of the salary they would be receiving for the same positions at public universities in Serbia proper. Given the low standard of living in the North as well as throughout Kosovo, and the rumors that were circulating about the majority of UPKM professors living north of the administrative line and thus making only occasional trips to teach in Kosovo, the situation was a source of substantial tension in Serbian academia.

For the international community, the replacement of Savić with Papović was the effective end of attempts to integrate the UPKM within the public system of higher education in Kosovo. In a roundtable discussion held in 2006 in Prishtina, Alexander Bayerl, then head of the Austrian Office in Prishtina, said:

(...) It looked for a certain time in 2003—that’s a historian perspective today—at that time the University of Mitrovica was more progressive than the University of Prishtina and we had many problems in the Europeanization of the University of Prishtina...At that time the University of Mitrovica was on track, we had an able rector with Gojko Savić, yet then struck

the disaster at the brink of success. A disaster being motivated because of the fear of certain circles of Kosovo Serbs that the lasting reform of University of Mitrovica issue might lead to the weakening of those force (sic) who do not intend to have a reconciliation and understanding and integration of the North into the Kosovar PISG system and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (...) With Mr. Papović's illegal installation we had lost a total grip on the University of Mitrovica, which developed over the time into a homebase of radical forces. (Bayerl 2006, 33)

Obviously, the international community in Kosovo had tried to control the UPKM and failed (Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011, 81–82; Daxner 2004). The change of government in Serbia meant that there would be fewer incentives to work toward the integration of the university into the system of higher education in Kosovo. Although there were proposals for compromise, including, for instance, the idea to recognize UPKM as a private institution whose donor would be Serbia, the political circumstances worked against the serious examination of any possible solutions. The situation, essentially, remained the same until the declaration of independence of Kosovo in 2008.

4.2.6. After independence

After the Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008, the relations between the two "sides" of higher education, expectedly, became even more strained. The University of Prishtina in Kosovska Mitrovica followed Serbia's official position, staunchly opposing Kosovo's independence. The Government of Serbia continued financing the UPKM, although the disproportion in salaries between the staff of UPKM and other public universities in Serbia was reduced. However, the official government rhetoric persisted in claiming that the University is at the "forefront of the defense of Serb national interests." During an official visit to the UPKM in 2010, in a speech to the students and staff, the then-Minister of Education Žarko Obradović, said: "[t]he strongest weapon of every state is education, and you are academic citizens, members of the University of Prishtina, you are the ones who will be teaching others and who, together with us, will defend Serbia and

Kosovo and Metochia.”⁴ Thus, the mission and identity of the university were strongly identified with the interests of Serbia and the defense of its state identity.

The University of Prishtina, on the other hand, continued developing as an institution primarily aimed at higher education for the majority Albanian population. The university even stopped maintaining its Serbian-language website. The transition to self-governance and the diminishing influence of international actors also meant that there were fewer incentives to work toward the integration of Serbian higher education into the framework of the state of Kosovo.

In 2010, the government of Kosovo established the second public university in Prizren, a town in the far south with a significant proportion of Bosniak and Turkish populations. The University of Prizren includes the program for teacher education in the Bosnian language, previously run as an external department of the University of Prishtina, a form of higher education explicitly aimed at ethnic and linguistic minorities. However, the effort is limited to teacher education and, although Serb students can understand Bosnian perfectly, it’s explicitly aimed only at Bosniaks.

The configuration of higher education in Kosovo reflected the relationship between the two states in whose framework it exists—Serbia and Kosovo. On the one hand, the Serbian government saw the University of Prishtina in Kosovska Mitrovica as the legal successor of the University of Prishtina, as much as it saw Kosovo as a legitimate part of Serbia. Thus, in the rhetorical and political struggle over Kosovo, UPKM was identified as the symbol of the Serbian statehood and territorial sovereignty. This is exactly the reason why the international administration in Kosovo between 1999 and 2008 was so eager to include it into its framework: having an institution that provides higher education in the language of the biggest minority would ensure the appearance of the high standard of minority rights, without forcing the international community to invest efforts into securing it. However, the change of government in 2004 that brought nationalists into power

⁴ “Ministar prosvete posetio Univerzitet” [The Minister of Education visits the University]. Article available at the homepage of the University of Prishtina, <http://www.pr.ac.rs/index.php/sr/home/info/vesti/445-ministar-prosvete-posetio-univerzitet> (accessed on 03/16/2013).

in Serbia, and especially the declaration of independence of Kosovo in 2008, rendered this plan highly improbable.

On the other hand, the government of Kosovo has continued to consolidate its higher education, as well as develop highly advanced policies in the fields of minority rights. The implementation of these policies, however, does not and can not pertain to the Serbs in the north of Kosovo. Thus, the “fate” of the UPKM is not dependent on either of the respective governments (Serbian or Kosovar), but, rather, on their mutual relationship. As long as this relationship continues to be strained, the configuration of higher education in Kosovo will reflect the legacy of the ethnic divisions that define the region.

4.2.7. Universities: hostages to the nation-state(s)?

Understanding the development of higher education in Kosovo is impossible without understanding the dynamics of political mobilization of its two dominant ethnic groups, Serbs and Albanians. The University of Prishtina, initially established to accommodate ethnic Albanians in the context of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, was meant as a “container” for minority claims that should have prevented them from jeopardizing the structure of the federation. As Yugoslavia started disintegrating, minority demands were getting louder, and the corresponding pressure to contain them increased to the point of repression and exclusion of ethnic Albanians from the University of Prishtina. The culmination of the conflict also meant the end of the University of Prishtina as it previously existed: the Serbian part reemerged as a new university in Kosovska Mitrovica, while Albanian staff and students returned from the underground, “parallel” institutions to the premises of the university.

The ensuing development was marked by different attempts to find a compromise that would entail the recognition of the transformed political context. However, it failed for a number of reasons. The international community focused on the technical aspects of governance at both universities, trying to circumvent the political issues related to the tensions between their respective political communities. Ultimately, of course, the development of universities in Kosovo was dependent not on the ideas (nor funding) of the international administration, but on the political framework(s) in which they were operating (cf. Den Boer

and van der Berg 2011). Given that both universities were seen by their respective political communities as symbols of the nation-state, it was not altogether surprising that the University of Prishtina did not subscribe to the “multiethnic dream” of the UNMIK administration, and even less surprising that the university in Kosovska Mitrovica remained a vehicle for the contestation of sovereignty. The change of government in Serbia in 2004 further radicalized its nationalist leadership, while the declaration of independence of Kosovo in 2008 effectively erased even the possibility of discussing its potential integration into the higher education system of Kosovo.

However, the changing extent to which different administrations of UPKM and corresponding governments in Serbia were prepared to consider integration into the system of public higher education of Kosovo suggests that the segregation of ethnic groups in higher education in Kosovo is a two-way process which depends equally on the policies of both governments, as well as on the approaches of different international actors. These groups, and their objectives, are not fixed: international and local agendas, interests, and goals can influence each other, as well as give rise to new ones (cf. Den Boer and van der Borgh 2011, 70). For the time being, though, the agendas of both “sides” seem to be firmly fixated on the processes of state- and nation-building, both complicated by the strained relationship between Kosovo and Serbia. In this context, higher education will probably continue being treated as an instrument for the development or defense of national identity, and not as a field of its own.

4.3. Sandžak: Dueling Universities

Defined by the International Crisis Group in 2005 as one of the post-Yugoslav areas that are “vulnerable and possible flashpoints of new violence” (ICG 2005, i), Sandžak is a region between Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Bosnia. The majority of its territory lies within the boundaries of Serbia. The region is ethnically and religiously mixed, with Muslims (or Bosniaks) currently representing about 70 percent of the population. The history of higher education in Sandžak is substantially shorter than the one in Kosovo, given that the region had no public higher education until after the regime change in Serbia in 2000.

However, the context of interethnic relations is not simpler, despite the fact that the tensions in Sandžak never escalated into a large-scale conflict like the ones in Kosovo or Bosnia and Herzegovina.

4.3.1. A brief history

For much of the last millennium, Sandžak was an administrative part of the Ottoman Empire, occasionally falling into the hands of Austria-Hungary. The area became part of Serbia for the first time in modern history after the end of the First Balkan War in 1912. Shifting borders, however, did not change the ethnic makeup of the area, which remained populated by Muslim and (predominantly Orthodox) Christian populations, respectively. At certain periods, these populations lived side by side in peace, but conflicts frequently erupted. During the WWII, some of the Muslims in the region joined the occupying Nazi forces, which helped contribute to the rift between the Muslim and Christian population.

The beginning of the development of education in Sandžak is tied to the period following WWII, when the newly established state administration began more substantial work to modernize the region and include it into the framework of public education, similar to the efforts in Kosovo. The ICG (2005, 6) report states that “prior to 1945, only five people from Novi Pazar—two Serbs and three Bosniaks—had any formal education beyond the fifth year of elementary school. The communist authorities built new schools, including a gymnasium. Higher education was largely separate, though; most Serbs went to universities in Niš or Belgrade, while many Bosniaks attended those in Sarajevo and later Pristina.”

The political dynamics that enabled the foundation of the University of Prishtina, described in the first section of this chapter, brought about a substantial change in the status of Muslims in Yugoslavia. The 1974 Constitution recognized Muslims as an ethnic group and a constituent nation in the Social Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, thus granting them status equal to other constituent nations—Serbs, Croats, Macedonians, and Slovenes. This was a strategy aimed at the “containment” of ethnic differences by providing a venue for their political expression. The ICG comments that during the period, Muslims were well integrated into the local structures, with the usual

division of power being a Muslim in the position of the mayor and a Serb as chief of the local branch of the League of Communists (ICG 2005, 6). Though endorsing the principle of ethnic grouping in politics, the division of power probably acted to ensure some sort of equal representation of different interests, at least on the municipal level.

The period of the disintegration of former Yugoslavia, however, brought about a major change. The processes of ethnic mobilization did not circumvent the area of Sandžak. On the one hand, Serbian national identity was being consolidated through a re-vamping of a strongly anti-Muslim rhetoric and sentiment connected to the construction of national(ist) history in relation to five hundred years of Turkish (Ottoman) occupation. On the other hand, the Muslims in Sandžak, in the wake of their brethren in Bosnia, started discussing in more detail what their identity meant, especially in the context of the breakup of the Yugoslav federation. In 1990, a local branch of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) was founded; the party was, at the time, based in Bosnia and headed by Alija Izetbegović, later to become the president of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although containing different inner fractions, the SDA supported a rather Islamized form of Bosniak identity. Two politicians formed its Sandžak branch: the first was Sulejman Ugljanin, who endorsed a rather extreme right-wing interpretation of the Muslim identity question. The second was Rasim Ljajić, who focused on the pursuing of Muslim ethnic interests within the framework of the state, first in SFR Yugoslavia, and then—after Bosnia declared independence in 1992 and the SDA in Sandžak was established as an independent party—in Serbia or rump Yugoslavia. The party continued its work on the ethnic mobilization of Sandžak Muslims, forming a national minority council (which, at the time, was still not recognized as a legitimate form of political organization by the state) and drafting the requests for the autonomy and devolution of powers in a document entitled “The memorandum on the special status of Sandžak.” The Council proceeded to organize a local referendum on autonomy, at which reportedly 98.90 percent of those who voted supported political autonomy. Not surprisingly, the governments in Belgrade and in Podgorica viewed these activities rather unfavorably; the Belgrade government continued to pursue the leaders of the SDA, eventually forcing Ugljanin into exile in Turkey (Morrison 2008, 8).

After war broke out in Bosnia, serious repression began. The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights documented a number of human rights abuses of local Muslims perpetrated by the Serbian police forces or the army from neighboring Republika Srpska, the Bosnian Serb entity established during the war. Three cases are most widely known. One happened on October 22, 1992, when Serbian security forces stopped a local bus, kidnapping 16 men and one woman and subsequently killing them in Bosnia. The second and the third both happened in February 1993. On the first occasion, soldiers of the Army of Republika Srpska crossed into Montenegro, kidnapping twelve members of the same family, while torturing and killing a thirteenth. The other happened in the village of Štrpci, when Bosnian Serb forces stopped the Belgrade–Bar train, taking away twenty Bosniaks and presumably murdering them. The Dayton Peace Agreement that brought an end to the war in Bosnia prevented further incidents of a similar scale, but did not by any means stop state repression—different reports state that Muslims in Novi Pazar and the rest of Sandžak were sacked, interrogated, randomly arrested and even, on occasions, their houses firebombed (Morrison 2008).

4.3.2. After regime change

The end of the regime of Slobodan Milošević marked a new direction in the treatment of Sandžak Bosniaks. In the 2000 presidential and municipal elections, Ugljanin's party (SDA) won the overwhelming majority in all Sandžak municipalities, with Ljajić's (SDA-Rasim Ljajić, after the elections renamed SDP) getting a significantly smaller portion. As parliamentary elections approached, both leaders courted the (future) Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić: Ugljanin offered "his" votes in exchange for five parliamentary seats, while Ljajić asked for only two, but including a position for himself as minister. Đinđić chose Ljajić, who was subsequently given the position of minister for human and minority rights, while Ugljanin's party was left outside Parliament. This probably contributed to the bitter rivalry, which had already been developing for a while, between two Sandžak political leaders.

The regime change equally marked a turn in the way in which the central government in Serbia was approaching the "Bosniak question." As could be seen from the dynamics related to the introduction of reli-

gious and civic education described in Chapter 3, Đinđić's ambition was to distance both himself and his government from the legacy of the Milošević regime. This implied a fundamental change in the treatment of minorities. This wasn't only driven by the desire to uphold human and minority rights standards, however. The prime minister thought that ethnic minorities, as increasingly influential political actors, could be coopted as political partners rather than adversaries.

The strategy thus changed from repression that characterized the last years of the Milošević regime to an attempt to integrate ethnic and religious minorities into the political framework of the state, and thus ensure much-needed support for political and economic changes the government was trying to implement. This entailed concessions primarily in the domain of educational and cultural rights. For instance, when the government introduced religious education to primary and secondary schools, the Islamic community was allowed to teach in areas with substantial numbers of Muslims—most notably, Sandžak. The *reis-ul-ulemah* of the Muslim community in Serbia, Mustafa Cerić, was consulted in the discussions on the introduction of a new subject—religious education. However, the introduction of religious education was not a concession aimed specifically at Bosniaks; it was symbolic gesture targeting all major religious communities (and, presumably, their members) in Serbia equally. Something else was needed to mark the “special relationship” between government and the community. This is how the idea of opening a higher education institution in Novi Pazar came to existence.

The initiator of the idea was Mufti Zukorlić, a young Muslim cleric deemed “charismatic” and “modern” by a number of foreign commentators. According to the interviewed actors who were involved in this aspect of policy, Đinđić turned to Mufti in order to avoid escalating the tensions between Ljajić and Ugljanin. Mufti's argument was that a university in Novi Pazar could help the region to develop and prosper, and thus put an end to the internal political divisions. For the prime minister, both arguments probably seemed sound at the time. The region was underdeveloped, and thus badly in need of an economic boost. The bickering of political leaders, however, was not only problematic because it was preventing long-term economic development, but also because it made their cooptation into the state framework and the exercise of control more complicated. In essence, the

reasons for establishing a university in Novi Pazar were not much different from the ones that led Tito to establish a university in Prishtina in 1969. On the one hand, the region needed educated people to drive economic and political development. On the other hand, the accommodation of minority claims in the context of opening an institution of higher education was expected to result in political support to the ruling coalition.

The new regime, however, had very little experience with minority higher education. Apart from the Hungarian-language programs in Vojvodina, which were not subject to great political contestation, the only preceding case in institutional memory was Kosovo—and that, obviously, could not have been used as an example of “good practice.” This is why it was not difficult to accept the idea of a university in Novi Pazar that would be run as a private initiative. Thus, in 2002, the International University of Novi Pazar (IUNP) was officially established.

4.3.3. The International University of Novi Pazar

Given that the legal framework for higher education in Serbia did not allow religious communities to establish higher education institutions, the university’s official founder was a private company called “Refref,” which was based in Novi Pazar. Mufti Zukorlić was (and still is) one of the company’s founders and shareholders. The company immediately transferred rights of ownership to the Islam Community (IC) in Serbia, transforming all the property of the university into a *waqf*—religious endowment of the IC—and established the IC as the sole bearer of responsibilities and decisions. Thus, IUNP was from the beginning defined and positioned as the university for the Muslim community in Sandžak. During the opening ceremony in 2003, Muhamed Filipović—one of the most prominent Bosnian intellectuals from former Yugoslavia—stated: “Indeed, the birth of a university is a big historical event, for Sandžak Bosniaks perhaps the most important since they had been faced with the insecurity of survival. Bosniaks can only go freely ahead, towards modern and European values, if they invest in scholarship (...) This university should contribute to that end. I leave to the people of Sandžak a legacy to help this university and the honorable intention of those who founded it.”

The Muslims in Sandžak were not the only target group for the IUNP, though. Similarly to the International University of Sarajevo and the Burch International University (also in Sarajevo), the designation “international” in its name signified less the approach to curriculum and more its openness to international students, including those from Turkey. In this context, IUNP is a typical representative of a higher education institution within the pan-Islamic networks present in post-Dayton Western Balkans (cf. Sarajlic 2010a, 24–25).

Thus, although the institution itself had an ethnoreligious identity, the curriculum at the International University of Novi Pazar was predominantly secular. The university’s programs included the English and German language and literature, computer science, design, and art. The only programs with a more pronounced “ethnic” component were Bosnian and Serbian language and literature. As a matter of fact, the approach to the design of programs and curriculum seems to have been based primarily on a market logic: besides the departments for the study of national language(s) and literary canons, the programs were primarily projected according to the demand from potential students (cf. ICG 2005, 29). In effect, the concept of the International University of Novi Pazar represented a mixture of identity-oriented and capitalist rationales: it aimed to develop programs that could attract substantial numbers of fee-paying students, but this was wrapped into the broader platform of the recognition and emancipation of Bosniak Muslims as an identity group in Sandžak.

This approach, which combined ethnic integration with market-oriented education, initially chimed well with the public policies of the government of Serbia. Not least because of the Ljajic–Đinđić alliance, decentralization and divesting of power to local councils and groups were perceived as the way to address minority concerns in post-Milošević Serbia. Not only did the government provide the initial vetting for the idea, and later also a legal “clearance” in the form of an operating license; it also promised to extend public funding to the IUNP, which, at the time, would have set a precedent, given that public funding was reserved for public institutions of higher education. At the opening ceremony in 2003, Gašo Knežević, at the time the Minister of Education and Sports, said that “we are now looking for a legal way of supporting the IUNP financially, so that entrepreneurial people from this area would not be left alone.” Čedomir Jovanović, at

the time vice-prime minister and one of the closest associates of Prime Minister Đinđić, stated: “For a long time, these areas have been ruled by ignorance, intolerance, and lack of understanding, and thus the best possible paradigm is the fact that this University managed to transcend all the negative consequences of these differences, and to affirm everything good that is a difference (...) May the University grow. And may it be just one of the light spots in the darkness that enveloped this space and society not only in the last ten years, but for centuries, it seems, partially because there were so little bright examples such as this university.”⁵

Jovanović’s words are again revealing for understanding the reasoning of the government at the time. “Differences” were perceived as “positive,” as long as they were channeled through acceptable and state-vetted means, such as the university. This recognition of difference was constructed in opposition to the “preceding ten years,” which signified the rule of Milošević, but also “centuries,” which (though a careful analyst might have spotted a rather uncanny resemblance to the anti-Muslim rhetorics of “five hundred years of Ottoman rule”) probably signified Serbia’s “long march” towards modernity, exemplified in metaphors of “light” and “brightness” contrasted with the “darkness” that enveloped the region throughout its history. Not unlike the introduction of religious education in the previous chapter, the inauguration of the International University of Novi Pazar was taken by the Serbian government in 2003 as an opportunity to establish a symbolic difference from the preceding Milošević regime, but also to claim the “modernizing” or “civilizing” role for itself.

The alliance between the government and the International University of Novi Pazar did not last for very long, however. The assassination of Prime Minister Đinđić in 2003 and the change of government in Serbia in 2004 also had implications for the ways in which the issue of Bosniak education was approached. It brought about the establishment of the second university in Sandžak—the State University of Novi Pazar.

⁵ “Poznati o nama” [What famous people said about us], web site of the International University of Novi Pazar (<http://www.uninp.edu.rs/sr-latn/o-univerzitetu/upoznavanje-sa-univerzitetom/poznati-o-nama/>). Accessed 10/09/2013.

As a matter of fact, competition in higher education in Novi Pazar began soon after the establishment of the International University of Novi Pazar, widely known locally as “Mufti’s University.” The PDA and Ugljanin realized that their political platform lacked a focus on higher education, and they organized the establishment of a number of external departments of public universities in Serbia in a building in downtown Novi Pazar, a project that had already been started by the former Milošević government in mid-1990s (ICG 2005, 29). However, this was still not an independent institution, but a collection of diverse departments similar to what had existed in Prishtina prior to the establishment of the university in 1969; thus, it could not really compete with Mufti’s University, which was an independent institution in its own right. The elections in 2004 provided the window of opportunity needed to elevate the status of these diverse departments to a full university. Namely, a right-wing conservative party, the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), won the majority of votes; however, in order to form the government, it required the backing of a number of minority parties. Ugljanin’s SDA offered their votes, but not before Ugljanin negotiated the opening of a publicly-financed state university in exchange for support. The DSS conceded, and the State University of Novi Pazar (SUNP) was inaugurated in 2005.

4.3.4. The State University of Novi Pazar

In many ways, the State University of Novi Pazar was conceived as the exact opposite of the International University. To begin with, the designation “State” in its name (it is the only public university in Serbia to call itself that—other public universities have only geographical designations, for instance University of Belgrade, University of Novi Sad, University of Kragujevac) was a clear signal that the institution was founded, and thus also fully financially supported, by the Republic of Serbia, in opposition to “Mufti’s University,” which was established by a private company and funded through the combination of donor support and tuition fees. The orientation of the university was more civic or secular than that of the IUNP as well: although some of the female students wore headscarves, the curriculum was mostly focused on the technical and natural sciences, although it did include programs in Bosnian and Serbian language and literature. The official discourse

of the institution was likewise strongly integrative: there was no mentioning whatsoever of Bosniak or Muslim identity. On the contrary, the university strongly emphasized its integration into the official state and public administration network of the Republic of Serbia. It boasted regular visits from state officials and advertised its cooperation with other public universities in the country; in terms of international cooperation, it tended to privilege Russian, Belarusian, and other Eastern European partners, although it does participate in a number of EU-funded initiatives (e.g., Tempus, Erasmus) as well.

The two universities in Novi Pazar can be seen as examples of two distinct paradigms for approaching the issue of minorities in higher education. One, epitomized by the IUNP, is a group-specific approach that sees higher education as an instrument for the development (and “survival”) of a particular ethnoreligious group; in this paradigm, the university is an institution that is primarily directed at members of the group, and situated within the project of developing their distinct political and social identity. The other paradigm, exemplified by the SUNP, sees higher education as means of integration, primarily defined as integration into the majority political and social structures; in this case, specific group identity is not emphasized, but rather submerged in the broader context of the state.

However, the two universities are not just examples of different paradigms in minority integration. They also represent bitter rivals. There is open animosity between the staff of the two universities, and they use every opportunity to criticize each other, sometimes in rather sharp terms. The competition, though, is not primarily over students or resources: the two universities have different sources of funding, and SUNP tends to avoid accepting IUNP graduates to master programs. Rather, the quarrel is over which university will become more influential, becoming synonymous with higher education in Sandžak. Thus, in this sense, the rift between two universities is reflective of the conflict between their respective sponsoring political parties.

4.3.5. The puzzle of dueling universities

From the perspective of public policy, the existence of two universities in Novi Pazar is quite a puzzle. Why did the government first support (or promise to support) the International University of Novi Pazar, but

then establish the State University in the same town? The massification of higher education would not be a sufficient reason, given that Novi Pazar has a total population of about 100,000, while other university cities and towns in Serbia have between 1.5 million (Belgrade, with two public universities) and 150,000 (Kragujevac, with one). Thus, the student numbers alone could not justify the existence of two universities in Novi Pazar. Similarly, the existence of two universities is not explainable by diversification: with some exceptions, IUNP and SUNP offer strikingly similar academic programs.

This hints that we need to look at the broader political background of these decisions. From a political perspective, the shift of governmental support from the IUNP to the SUNP could be taken as a reflection of the switch from a multicultural model of minority integration, endorsed by the Đinđić government between 2001 and 2004, to the more homogenizing approach propounded by the subsequent Koštunica government between 2004 and 2008. However, this still does not explain why IUNP was allowed to continue operating after 2005, or why, for instance, the other university could not have been located in a different town in Sandžak (e.g., Raška, which is 20km away from Novi Pazar and has a predominantly Serbian population).

The puzzle of “dueling” universities becomes clearer if contextualized within the political dynamics of Sandžak, as well as its relationship with the rest of Serbia, particularly the central government in Belgrade. Namely, the two universities present just the tip of the iceberg of the division in the Sandžak society between the supporters of Mufti Zukorlić and, until recently, Rasim Ljajić on the one hand, and Sulejman Ugljanin on the other. The division is not only political—it is also reflected in the conflict over supremacy in the Islamic Community in Serbia. Mufti supported the allegiance of the IC to Sarajevo, while Ugljanin and his party supported a contending leader, Zilkić, in Belgrade. Between 2006 and 2008, this significantly added to the polarization of the society in Sandžak, as two “groups” frequently clashed, resulting in one death (Morrison 2008, 9–11). The tensions between different political options continue to this day, “seeping” into other spheres of the society. The two universities—International University in Novi Pazar and the State University in Novi Pazar—are a case in point. “Membership” (whether in the sense of studying, or in the sense of teaching and administrative positions) at either of these two universities

actually means supporting one of these political options, rather than having a specific position of the role and status of the Sandžak Bosniaks or endorsing any particular approach to minority integration as such.

The divisions between these political options became particularly pronounced during the elections for the National Minority Councils (NMCs), introduced in 2009. NMCs have a broad mandate to represent the interests of a given national minority, including the fields of education and culture. In the 2010 elections, the votes went in favor of Zukorlić's list, with Ugljanin coming out second and Ljajić (who decided to run separately) third. However, the results were disputed and subsequently annulled. New elections never took place; this effectively led to a political stalemate. In the meantime, Mufti was growing increasingly radicalized, issuing frequent communiqués and statements that accused the central government of violating the rights of Sandžak Muslims and threatened to take to the streets (Barlovac 2011). He directs his narratives mostly to the local population, but also to the international community—for instance, his statements have included a call for international observers to guarantee peace in Sandžak. However, the reaction of the international community has been very cautious. On the other hand, he did manage to provoke the central government in Belgrade. Its reaction, expectedly, included the status of the International University of Novi Pazar.

In November 2011, the Serbian Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA) announced that it would not be granting accreditation to the IUNP. Mufti quickly retaliated, stating in the media that the decision had been politically motivated; in truth, the Commission was late with issuing the decision, for which the IUNP had to wait over three years. The IUNP appealed to the National Council for Higher Education, which has the right to overturn the decision, but it chose to uphold it; as Mufti noted in the media, the fact that the rector of the rival State University of Novi Pazar is in the National Council for Higher Education would have hinted at a conflict of interest at least, if not foul play.

4.3.6. Conclusions: *Divide et impera*

The weakening support to the International University of Novi Pazar, and the founding of the State University in Novi Pazar, are less the

reflections of different concepts of minority integration, and more of the changing perception of who would constitute a viable political partner in Sandžak. While the first post-Milošević government preferred Mufti as a “cultural” leader and Ljajić as a political partner, the second, between 2004 and 2008, turned to Ugljanin. The third, in power between 2008 and 2012, seems to have decided, at the time when the Mufti was growing increasingly radical, to opt for a solution that did not seek to challenge the existing structure of the power relationships. Thus, it chose to dismantle the IUNP as Mufti’s political power base, while allowing for the tensions between the two universities and their political communities to continue.

In this context, what at first could have appeared as a policy paradox—successive governmental support to two universities in a town of barely 100,000 inhabitants—becomes quite understandable as a political strategy. Support for higher education was not only a means of acquiring political coalitions, but shifting this support from the university of one political option to that of the other was also the means of respectively rewarding and punishing local political allies. Not altogether different from the strategy towards Albanian education in Tito’s Yugoslavia, the group identities were allowed to flourish, as long as they didn’t lend themselves to political mobilization. Once this equilibrium changed, the state moved towards limiting the expression of ethnic/religious identities through the creation of a more “neutral,” homogenizing higher education exemplified by SUNP.

In addition, shifting governmental support to different political options probably contributed to the perpetuation of their mutual conflict. In this sense, both universities in Sandžak are, actually, stakes in a game of political power. The fact that the parties in Sandžak are quarrelling effectively blocks the creation of a more coherent voice for the Bosniak minority in Serbia. The existence of two dueling universities, correspondingly, prevents the formation of a common Bosniak elite, which could challenge the grip of central government. Therefore, state policy towards higher education in Sandžak, can, in the final instance, be seen as a strategy for the “containment” of ethnic identities. The two universities are thus little more than expressions of social and political divisions that run across, however arbitrarily defined, boundaries of ethnic groups. In this context, the future development of higher education in Sandžak will primarily depend on the balance

of the political powers. As long as different political actors continue to see the university as primarily the means of gathering political support, these institutions are more likely to continue reinforcing social divisions than bridge them.

4.4. Macedonia: Between Peacebuilding and Ethnic Polarization?

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is another country in the region where two universities are located in a relatively small space. Tetovo, in northwestern Macedonia bordering Kosovo and Serbia, has about 53,000 inhabitants. Currently, it is home to Tetovo State University, as well as South East European University. Although Tetovo State University was initially founded in the 1990s, both universities, in their present forms, developed after 2000, and thus can be understood within the framework of post-conflict development in the Balkans. In the first decade after World War II, Tetovo had approximately the same proportion of Macedonian and Albanian populations, with the rest composed of Turks, Bosniaks, Serbs, and others. By the 1990s, similar to the demographic trends in Kosovo, Albanians made up for more than 50 percent population, while the second largest ethnic group—Macedonians—remained at 35 percent.

Macedonia was the only republic to secede peacefully from former Yugoslavia, following a referendum held in September 1991. For a long time, it was hailed by the international community as an example of the peaceful transition and accommodation of minority rights; this was, at least in part, because of the high presence of international peacekeeping troops. American diplomats suggested the deployment of CSCE (Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, later OSCE) peacekeeping mission in the summer of 1992. In the same year, Macedonia's President Kiro Gligorov requested the deployment of protective forces from the UN. Analysts claim that this was in part motivated by fears from the "spillover" of conflict from other parts of Yugoslavia and/or annexation by Serbian forces (Macedonia barely had any domestic army), and in part by fears of ethnic tensions coming from the within the newly independent country itself (Czapliński 2008, 157). The UN deployed its first peacekeeping mission in 1992. The mandate was

rather broad, ranging from armed troops to negotiations, reconciliation, and the development of civil society, thus combining military, diplomatic, and political instruments. Other international organizations, including the OSCE, were also present.

From the very beginning of the state-building process in Macedonia, the international actors were thus involved to a high degree, and substantially influenced the dynamics of political processes (Daftary 2001, 249). This would also be the case in the subsequent development of higher education. Unlike in Kosovo, where international organizations assumed a more proactive role only after the conflict had ended, the link between higher education and ethnic identities in Macedonia was primarily framed as conflict *prevention*. This, at the same time, likely explains why international organizations involved in the development of higher education policies failed to foresee the conflict shortly before it erupted; excessive focus on the “prevention” aspect could have led them to overestimate the potential of education to mitigate social and political conflicts. The issue, however, was a broader one: it concerned the dynamics of ethnic mobilization, the processes of “ethnic bargaining,” and the outcomes of different types of minority demands.

4.4.1. Ethnic politics

At the beginning of the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, the local political scene in Macedonia was predominantly organized according to the ethnic key: Albanians were represented both in the government and the parliament, but mostly because the sheer size of ethnic parties and the ensuing voting patterns effectively ruled out any ethnic group building a majority in the parliament without entering into a coalition (cf. Czapliński 2008, 46). However, both Albanians and Serbs boycotted the referendum for independence, citing the absence of guarantees for their human rights. After the proclamation of Macedonian independence, Albanian MPs refused to ratify the Constitution, since its preamble accorded them the status of minority and not of a constituent nation, which they interpreted as an attempt to build Macedonia as a monoethnic state (Czapliński 2008, 56). Czapliński writes that “There was an alarming shortage of contacts, lack of trust and separation between both communities. Many Macedonians feared that the real goal behind Albanian demands (...) was to create parallel

structures as a first step, following the Kosovo example, in the direction of separation. Albanians, on their part, often felt that they were treated as second class citizens because they faced problems in using their language in public life, did not have sufficient constitutional guarantees for their position and were heavily under-represented in public services and education, in particular at the higher level” (18). The issue of integration in public services, then, inevitably brought along the question of higher education.

4.4.2. The issue of higher education in the Albanian language

Until the dissolution of Yugoslavia, most Macedonian Albanians who went into higher education attended the University of Prishtina (cf. Czapliński 2008, 116; Arifi 2003). However, the worsening situation in Kosovo that transformed higher education in the Albanian language into an underground, parallel practice, and the growing insecurity in the region that made cross-border travel more complicated, presented a number of obstacles for those Albanians from Macedonia who wanted to get a higher education in their mother tongue. In addition, the breakup of Yugoslavia meant that they would effectively be pursuing their studies in a foreign country, which also posited problems in terms of recognition of degrees and financing (cf. Czapliński 2008). The Macedonian system of higher education at the time offered few alternatives. Macedonia had two public universities—one in the capital, Skopje (St. Cyril and Methodius), founded in 1949; and one in Bitola (St. Clement of Ohrid), founded in 1979. Teaching in the Albanian language had existed at the Faculty of Albanian Language and Literature and at the Pedagogical Academy within the University of Skopje: among other things, teacher education was recognized as one of the priorities in the modernization of the country, especially of the rural minority populations. However, the growing tensions in neighboring Kosovo also resulted in the stricter minority education policy in Macedonia. The Law on Secondary Education adopted in 1985 (within the vocational education reform described in Chapter 2) introduced a minimum number of students required for the formation of minority language classes. This led to a quick decline in the number of minority language classes, and a corresponding decline in

the demand for teachers. Finally, the Pedagogical Academy, which had classes in Albanian and Turkish, closed in 1988.

To what extent the amplification of the issue of higher education in Albanian as a marker of minority rights was the consequence of the objective complications in accessing education in the mother tongue, and to what extent it represented an element or symbol of broader ethnic mobilization is an open question. What is certain, however, is that from the time of Macedonian independence, higher education in Albanian language became one of the prime factors in the debate on the position and status of Albanians in Macedonia. The demands from the Albanian side were argued for with references to the numerical strength of the Albanian population, and the fact that there already existed primary and secondary education in the Albanian language. This argument was tied to the demands for the wider use of Albanian in public administration: effectively, Albanian political parties argued that the lack of Macedonian language proficiency prevented their fellow Albanians from being included in state institutions.

The Macedonian state, however, had a different interpretation of the issue. The officials argued that tertiary education in a mother tongue is rarely guaranteed as a right, and that it should be justified with more than numerical strength. Their vision of the integration of Albanians into public institutions was through the increase in the Macedonian language proficiency. Clearly, at this stage, Macedonian authorities harbored a very “civic” notion of the state: minorities were tolerated, but their successful participation in public life was contingent upon their adoption (or at least use) of the symbols of the dominant group—including language. This was not a view Albanians were ready to endorse. From the perspective of Albanian political parties, the process of statebuilding was an opportunity to substantially transform their own position in the newly independent republic.

4.4.3. University of Tetovo

In 1994, a group of Albanian intellectuals from the municipalities of Tetovo, Gostivar, and Debar initiated the project for a private institution with teaching in Albanian, dubbed the “University of Tetovo” (UT). Intellectuals from Kosovo, who at the time sought ways to provide Albanian-language tertiary education, which had all but disappeared

from the province after 1990, supported the initiative (Czapliński 2008, 127). The founders filed an official request for recognition, but the Macedonian government refused it, labeling it “illegal.” Despite this, the university was inaugurated with the signing of the founding document in December 1994 and the official opening ceremony in February 1995. The ceremony, however, turned into a violent incident. Macedonian police tried to prevent it from taking place, killing one Albanian, wounding another 26. The organizers were arrested. This became the first in a series of incidents that ended the illusion of a peaceful transition, and would eventually culminate in armed conflict.

In truth, the Macedonian government had a number of reasons to be suspicious about the University of Tetovo. Notwithstanding fears of the institution serving as a hotbed for the development of Albanian nationalism, the educational quality and transparency of UT were questionable at best. The number of study programs kept expanding, despite the fact that some of them barely had any students enrolled; at the same time, demand-driven programs (such as medicine and dentistry, opened primarily to cater to students from Kosovo) operated without even the basic facilities needed for that kind of education. Tuition fees were quite high in comparison to the living standard in the region (at some faculties reportedly going up to 1000 euro per year), and there were rumors of widespread corruption. Regardless of the truth value of these claims, what is certain is that Albanians in Macedonia regarded the UT as an important element in the struggle for their political rights and treated it accordingly; thus, issues related to education were mostly left in the background. In a 2002 report for the USAID, Kwiek (2002) summarized the issue: “By any standards, international or Macedonian, the institution is perceived, even by ethnic Albanians, as providing low quality education, being driven by political and nationalistic motivation, having no substantial infrastructure or well-qualified academic staff and consequently being unable to provide good higher education on a mass scale.”

4.4.4. From legal to political solutions

The international community immediately picked up on the issue of higher education in Albanian as an important factor in ethnic relations. Their approach was to integrate this problem within the overall

project of education reform in Macedonia. The Council of Europe's Legislative Reform program dedicated specific attention to the issue of minority rights in higher education legislation. As noted, at the time of secession from Yugoslavia, Macedonian higher education was under the auspices of the 1985 vocation-oriented education law, which forbade the opening of private education institutions and specified Macedonian as the language of instruction in higher education. The 1991 Constitution, on the other hand, did allow for the establishment of private institutions with teaching in Macedonian or one of the "world languages," but the dominant interpretation was that this did not include Albanian (Czapliński 2008, 92). Needless to say, this was also used as the basis for the claim that the foundation of the Tetovo University was unconstitutional. Thus, in this phase, international experts thought that persuading the Macedonian government to transform the legal framework in a way that would allow for higher education in a minority language would be the way to ensure the accommodation of Albanian political demands when it came to higher education in the mother tongue.

The new draft Law, completed over the course of 1997–99, was more open in terms of minority education provision. It allowed for teaching in minority languages "at the tertiary education institutions where teaching staff for elementary education is trained, and for secondary education, at pedagogical faculties" and stipulated that "[t]eaching of particular subjects can be performed in the languages of other nationalities for the purpose of sustaining and promoting the cultural and national identity" (Draft Law Art. 9; Czapliński 2008, 94). Although still attempting to limit the use of minority languages to specific domains (teacher training and the promotion of "cultural and national identity"), the draft law opened up possibilities for the integration of Albanian language teaching into public higher education institutions. However, the way it related to private higher education, and thus potentially the University of Tetovo, was much less clear. Finally, the Article 12 of the Law stipulated that:

Higher Education activities are to be conducted in the Macedonian language. Instruction is to be conducted in the respective languages of all nationalities at higher education institutions training pre-school instructors and teachers of general

studies/subjects. Higher education institutions training teachers giving instruction in particular subjects in the primary and secondary education system provide instruction on the methodology of teaching in the respective languages of all national minorities as well. In certain subjects of study instruction may also be conducted in the languages of national minorities should this be conducive to the fostering and developing of cultural and national identity.

The Macedonian state also continued to work on providing a framework for the integration of minorities into higher education. In 1995, the training of elementary school teachers at the Pedagogical academy, previously closed in 1988, was resumed. This was supposed to present an interim measure towards the creation of a faculty for teacher training which would have had lectures in a number of minority languages. However, students and Macedonian faculty protested this idea, in turn increasing the pressure from the Albanian side and contributing to the further radicalization of and support to the University of Tetovo (cf. Czapliński 2008, 40). In 1996–97, a quota system was implemented, which for the first time attempted to introduce proportional representation based on population numbers in education institutions. It did manage to increase the numbers of Albanian and other minority students at state institutions, but not substantially. In the same year, and again amidst widespread public protest, the parliament passed a special law regulating the teaching in minority languages at the pedagogical faculty in Skopje.

None of these solutions appealed particularly to the Albanian political parties, who were hoping that the education reform would come to include a more substantial recognition of their rights. Czapliński (2008, 143) writes: “The Government, by adopting the special decision to open teaching in the Albanian language first at the Pedagogical Academy and later on at the Pedagogical Faculty of the Skopje University, decided to, at least partially, meet the Albanian demands. However, from the political point of view, these decisions were taken much too late. The long delays caused growing support among Albanians for the idea of a separate Albanian university and made it more difficult for moderate Albanians to seek solutions in the framework of the legal system of the state.” This included the recognition of the Uni-

versity of Tetovo—from its beginnings, the intentions of its founders were for it to become a fully publicly funded university in Macedonia.

However, the new higher education legislation provided no space for such a development. The situation had escalated to the point in which all actors started viewing the issue of higher education in Albanian primarily, if not purely, as a matter of political contestation. The Albanian political parties were aiming for a legal framework that would enable the recognition of the UT, and were thus not particularly interested in any other solution. The Macedonian side, on the other hand, wanted to retain control over higher education, and thus was opposed to any initiative that seemed to be supporting the development of private initiatives. This dynamic prevented a number of solutions from yielding substantial results, including the 1997 quota system and the Transitional Year Program initiated by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM). Among international organizations, the opinion slowly started shifting towards the idea of abandoning the technical and governance-related aspects of the reform, and finding a “political solution” instead (cf. Czapliński 2008, 150).

The events in the subsequent years both precipitated this way of approaching the issue and made it more likely. While international organizations were busy looking for creative solutions, the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia began, sparking a massive refugee crisis as Albanians from Kosovo were in large numbers transported across the border to Macedonia. The situation around the border became rather intense, prompting, among other things, the OSCE High Commissioner to issue an early warning of the risk of potential conflict “spill-over” (Czapliński 2008, 181). Paradoxically, the conflict in Kosovo was thus at the same time the trigger for the ensuing conflict in Macedonia, but also the factor that contributed to the focus of the international community on the region, resulting, among other things, in the creation of Tetovo’s second institution of higher education: the South East European University (SEEU).

4.4.5. Planning the South East European University

The idea for SEEU originated at least as early as 1995, when the OSCE HCNM proposed the creation of a private higher education center with teaching in Albanian. At this time, the institution was

supposed to focus on public administration and teacher training—two subjects that were deficient and in high demand among potential Albanian students. In addition, the proposal stated that the institution should include not only teaching in Albanian, but also in Macedonian and English. The trilingualism was introduced not only to distinguish the future institution from the Albanian-only UT, but also in order to signal that, first, it was an institution that aimed at the integration of Albanians into the predominantly Macedonian-speaking society, and second, that it would include a good deal of international involvement. Czapliński acknowledges openly these reasons: “[t]he ‘international’ dimension was an important element of the HCNM proposal since Albanians as well as Macedonians could ill afford to openly reject the idea being presented as ‘European’ and enjoying full support of the international community” (2008, 202). In this stage of planning, the international community’s approach to higher education was thus very similar to the one in Kosovo after its conflict. The emphasis was on technical solutions, and the adoption of externally validated standards. The hope was that the broader “European” framework, in this case, exemplified through the introduction of English as a language of instruction, would work to overcome the internal political tensions between the dominant ethnic groups.

The preparations for the SEEU followed a standard pattern of “policy transfer,” from design at the international level to implementation on the local. A team of international experts prepared the feasibility study for SEEU, and presented it in April 2000. In the ensuing months, a Swiss private consulting company developed the business plan for the university. The plan envisaged that at least one third of the curriculum be carried out in English; it also envisaged scholarships and other forms of financial aid for students, given that it was assumed the majority would not be able to cover tuition fees.

The reactions from the center of the political spectrum were rather favorable. However, SEEU provided new challenges and confrontations for the rest of the Macedonian political scene. The Macedonian right-wing, spearheaded by the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences (MANU) and certain academics from the universities in Skopje and Bitola, rejected this solution, citing the absence of comparable levels of minority rights in higher education elsewhere. Their statement read: “[the] Macedonian state will make a historical mistake if

it decides to legitimise the opening of [a] special state institution of higher education in the minority languages. This step has no economic justification and will lead toward federalisation and disintegration of the state” (MANU 2000). Reactions coming from the leadership of the University of Tetovo were equally extreme, given that anything short of full recognition of the UT was seen as “giving in.”

In this period, the dynamics on both sides of the Macedonian political spectrum were very similar to the dynamics in Kosovo. The international community was looking for a “middle ground” exemplified through predominantly technical solutions that aimed at surmounting the ethnic tensions on the ground. At the same time, the ethnic entrepreneurs on the both sides were rejecting any sort of compromise, seeing it as a concession to the other side. This is when the strategy shifted towards finding “political solutions.” In essence, this meant pressuring the local actors towards adopting a solution. Eventually, political pressure managed to overcome opposition on both sides, and plans for the development of SEEU went on. The construction work began in February 2001. However, it was interrupted by the onset of violence in Macedonia.

4.4.6. The conflict and the Ohrid Framework Agreement

As noted, the conflict in Macedonia was part of a wider conflict that started with NATO intervention in Kosovo, resulting in a refugee crisis, substantially altering the composition of the population at the border, and leading to an environment in which armed extremist groups, primarily members of the National Liberation Army, could relatively easily cross the border without being observed. The absence of international peacekeepers, crime and conflict in the border region, relative weakness of the Macedonian police, combined with the existing ethnic cleavages, provided a fertile ground for the onset of the conflict. Czapliński writes:

When the fighting broke out, Albanians rebels came up with demands which had already been formulated earlier by existing Albanian political parties and they included: a constitutional status for Albanians, the recognition of Albanian as a second official language, decentralization leading to more rights to local

communities, equal opportunities in employment, in particular in public administration, the police and the army and full educational rights. There had been progress in some of those fields, although one could conclude that too little was done too late. The Macedonian authorities were reluctant to move on many of these issues and even minimal progress was often rejected on legal grounds and on the basis of a very limited interpretation of the Macedonian Constitution. These factors were used by Albanian radicals to stimulate tensions and feed nationalism.” (Czapliński 2008, 226)

The conflict began by a series of isolated incidents, predominantly attacks on police forces in the north, but by early spring spread to the area around Tetovo. At one point, the students and professors of UT organized a demonstration in support of the NLA (*ibid.*, 230). As fighting escalated, international involvement became more prominent: the Macedonian government was, again, pressed to look for a “political solution” resulting in the creation of a government of national unity in May 2001. However, this failed to bring about a lasting ceasefire. Fighting continued, and NLA fighters reached a village near Skopje in June (*ibid.*). It was at this moment that the EU and the US appointed special representatives and internationally sponsored talks began.

The negotiations moved to Ohrid in July and August, resulting finally in the signing of the peace treaty known as the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA). The agreement set the framework for the political structure of the country. In particular, it regulated the use of official languages—defined as any language spoken by over 20% of the population. Thus, the agreement finally managed to guarantee the equal representation of Albanians in public administration, at least in parts of the country where they were a substantial part of the population. The part of the Agreement that regulated the use of languages also opened the possibility for public funding for higher education in Albanian by stipulating that “State funding will be provided for university level education in languages spoken by at least 20% of the population of Macedonia, on the basis of specific agreements” (OFA, 6.2.).

Although, as Czapliński (2008) rightly notes, higher education was not the main focus of Ohrid Framework Agreement, this formulation did seem to, at least for the time being, satisfy all sides. More impor-

tantly, however, the conflict had an additional, unforeseen effect: it galvanized the international support for the SEEU, providing the financial “injection” necessary to complete the project.

4.4.7. South East European University

SEEU was inaugurated in November 2001. It was a private higher education institution with programs in Law, Business and Public Administration, Communication Science and Technology, and teacher training. The main donors were the US, the European Commission and the Netherlands; the majority of students, however, paid tuition fees. SEEU promoted the concept of the “flexible use of languages,” which meant that lectures and other activities could be conducted in Albanian, Macedonian or English. In public relations, the SEEU tried to promote the image of a “multicultural” university, which was, at least in principle, open to members of all ethnic groups. However, in practice, during the first years the student body remained predominantly Albanian. This was probably, in part, due to security reasons, but also because in Macedonia SEEU was widely perceived as “an Albanian university.”

Its discourse reflected the somewhat ambiguous relationship between the political aim to provide higher education for Albanian speakers, and the multiethnic or multicultural ideal behind the project. For instance, its principles stated that SEEU will be “socially committed and open to all students on the basis of equity and merit, regardless of their ideological, political, cultural, and social background” and, at the same time, “be committed to the Albanian culture, language, and population, while defining itself in a broad international perspective and in a multilingual approach to teaching and research.”⁶

This ambiguity was as a source of tension for SEEU. Its international leadership probably feared that the university (and the project) would become “hijacked” for different (primarily Albanian) political goals and agendas, and thus fought hard to maintain the multiethnic

⁶ See the homepage of South East European University SEEU. <http://www.seeu.edu.mk/> (accessed on 03/16/2013).

“feel” to the project. The international dimension was seen as essential to this; Czapliński (2008, 210) writes that “the commitment of many Albanians to this multi-ethnic and multi-lingual approach did not seem to be genuine and a strong role of the international community, especially in the initial phase, seemed to be necessary in order to ensure acceptance of the goals of integration and building a tolerant society in full accordance with European standards, equal opportunities for everyone and a high quality academic experience.” Correspondingly, SEEU was integrated into a number of international associations (including the European University Association and International Association of Universities), involved in bilateral agreements (primarily with US and European institutions), and overall developed a strong international network. In a sense, this network was constructed as the guarantee of successful integration. The international community perceived SEEU as an instrument of peacebuilding that would come to ensure that the integration of Albanian and Macedonian communities would proceed in the way envisaged by international peacekeepers.

This vision of integration also included the idea that SEEU would slowly take over the functions of the University of Tetovo, “phasing out” its rival institution (218). The representatives of the international community thought that this would be a natural process, in which a high-quality, recognized international institution would attract and “win over” students from the low-quality, “illegal” one. This, *inter alia*, was a relatively explicit goal of the SEEU project. However, nothing of the kind happened. As a matter of fact, the conflict, which enabled the creation of SEEU, also provided the grounds for the reinvention of the UT. This happened through a creative interpretation of the legislation regulating the use of languages in Macedonia, leading to the development of the State University of Tetovo.

4.4.8. University of Tetovo reloaded

The initial period of the implementation of the OFA was fraught with difficulties, mostly pertaining to the clashes between Macedonian and Albanian political parties, but also between parties in each ethnic group concerning the interpretation of different points of the agreement (cf. Bieber 2008). As a consequence, most of the legal frame-

work ensuing from the OFA, including the highly relevant Law on Self-Governance, was adopted only in 2004. During this time, SEEU was consolidating, managing to attract some students from the UT; the number of students at the UT was dropping, and the institution was becoming increasingly financially vulnerable. It appeared as if the “phasing out” of the UT was taking hold. However, local political dynamics interfered once again.

In 2002, a new Albanian political party, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), was formed, managing to secure the highest number of votes at the 2002 parliamentary elections and thus forming a coalition government with the Macedonian party “Together for Macedonia” (SDSM). Seeking to distance itself from the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), the chief Albanian political partner in the founding of the SEEU, DUI started working on the transformation of the UT with the view of turning it into a public institution with higher education in the Albanian language. The fact that Aziz Polozhani, a member of DUI, was appointed Minister of Education, greatly helped the process. The Government first proposed amendments to the Law on Higher Education, which were adopted in 2003, and then officially declared the establishment of a state funded university that would feature education in Albanian. The Macedonian Parliament adopted the decision early in 2004.

Although the act was concealed under the idea of a “new university,” most of the actors involved agreed that it constituted a *de facto* legalization of the UT. The leadership of the UT did change, though, as the Minister thought the old leadership compromised due to its links with extremist groups. However, the infrastructure as well as the structure of the study programs and teaching staff remained almost the same. The new university was baptized the “State University of Tetovo” (SUT) and came to comprise eight faculties. Although the Higher Education Law obliged institutions of higher education to have teaching in Macedonian, in reality this related to a very small proportion of courses taught at the institution. The students were almost exclusively Albanian, including many who came from neighboring countries, primarily Kosovo (Bieber 2008, 285–86).

The transformation of the University of Tetovo into a public institution obviously did not go entirely uncontested. The opposition primarily came from ethnic Macedonian political parties, who claimed

that it represented a recognition of an otherwise illegal endeavor, and argued that the OFA provisions for publicly funded higher education in Albanian language concerned the possibility of extending state funding to SEEU, but not the development of an altogether different university. However, given the ambiguity of the wording, its “proper” interpretation depended on the balance of political powers in the Macedonian political scene at the time. The SUT officially began in October 2004 as the third public higher education institution in the Republic of Macedonia.

4.4.9. After 2004: two universities, one town

The opening (or legalization) of the SUT was challenging for SEEU, given that the two institutions were now competing for the same potential pool of students (cf. EUA 2009). However, SEEU leadership maintained that the institution’s academic standards were significantly above those of the SUT, and on this basis also dismissed any ideas about a possible merger between the two institutions (Czapliński 2008, 288). A specific form of parallelism did develop, as SEEU tolerated a number of its professors teaching at the SUT, and there was some program and curriculum overlap between the two institutions (Czapliński 2008, 288; EUA 2009, 7).

The most sensitive point, of course, was financial sustainability. Whereas the public status of the SUT guaranteed the funding, at least for infrastructure, and the ability for at least a part of its students to study without tuition fees, donor support to SEEU was decreasing, and the financial burden on students potentially increasing. A partial solution was found in 2008, when a new law on higher education enabled SEEU to transform into a public-private non-profit institution, which meant it could receive funding from the state. However, the extent to which this has been implemented remains somewhat vague (cf. Farrington and Abazi 2009).

In sum, two separate universities in Tetovo have been in existence for over ten years. One, initially “illegal,” has since become a state institution with public funding. The other, clearly developed as an international initiative, is a public-private partnership primarily relying on tuition fees and donor support. Although there can be no mention of “dueling” in the sense in which it exists between the two universities

in Novi Pazar described previously, the relationship between the two institutions is much more that of coexistence and partial competition than of complementarity. From the financial perspective, the public funding of both (even if partial) can hardly be justified. From a policy perspective, it hardly makes any sense to maintain two universities in Tetovo. An obvious question, then, is why are they both still there?

The ensuing part will aim to contextualize the development of the two universities within their respective political rationales. In this context, neither SEEU nor the SUT are seen as the “best” solutions for objectively identifiable problems, but are instead interpreted as being representative of specific approaches to the issue of ethnic minorities and their position within the education system. Thus, their coexistence can tell us more about the conceptualization of education policies, and the ways in which different political actors construct identities as their basis.

4.4.10. Shifting concepts of minority education

The development of higher education in Macedonia can be read as a reflection of different, though partially overlapping, concepts of minority integration. The first phase of its development, which began even before Macedonia became independent, included higher education for minority groups in specific study programs—such as language and literature, and teacher education—which were seen as essential to the preservation of the group’s distinct “cultural identity.” This approach was characteristic of socialist Yugoslavia, which limited the expression of ethnic, religious, and cultural identities to the domains of culture and arts, while maintaining a relatively uniform domain of public administration. It was only in the last years before the breakup, in the overall nationalist mobilization, that particular cultural and group identities began to “seep through” and display openly in the domain of public affairs.

Of course, the fate of these mobilizations depended on group size and dominance. Minority nationalist mobilization, such as in the cases of Serbs in Croatia, Albanians in Kosovo, or Bosniaks in Serbia, was not only not tolerated by the majority ethnic groups, but also, in most cases, violently repressed. The post-Yugoslav states inherited a rather monoethnic notion of the state, which resulted in the privileging of

the dominant ethnic group without necessarily paying attention to the demands or needs of minorities.

The early phase of Macedonian independence is a good example of this sort of dynamic. Whereas the Macedonian political actors were mostly concerned with the consolidation of the state, understood, as defined in the Preamble to the 1991 Constitution, as the “state of the Macedonian people,” the Albanian political actors accused this approach as the drive towards “monoethnicity.” Conversely, they understood the processes of the dissolution of Yugoslavia as an opportunity and the way to work towards greater independence and/or autonomy of their ethnic group, reflected in their opposition to the 1991 Constitution. Unlike in Kosovo, however, the work toward autonomy remained, throughout the 1990s, primarily in the framework of Macedonian state structures. The reasons might have included the fact that there was no strong state repression, such as in Serbia, but also that international preventive troops had already been deployed. Eager to avoid further altering of borders, the international community pressed for solutions within the Macedonian state framework. A stronger involvement from the part of the international community, in particular the OSCE, would follow only after the founding of the University of Tetovo.

The founding of the University of Tetovo in 1994, in itself, can be seen as the culmination of the phase in which the Macedonian political actors sought to integrate education for the Albanian minority within the framework defined by the majority ethnic group, and the Albanian political actors fought to oppose it. The Albanian parties thus developed, in effect, a “parallel institution,” whereas the Macedonian government considered this illegal and, instead, tried to develop the venues for minority higher education within the existing higher education institutions.

During this period, the requests for the development of higher education in Albanian language were mostly countered by relatively strict interpretations of the Macedonian constitution, which rendered private higher education institutions as well as those with teaching in a different language “unconstitutional.” Thus, at the time, the Albanian side utilized the discourse of human rights (in terms of equal rights to education); the (ethnic) Macedonian side applied the legalistic discourse, at times supplemented by appeals to the absence of

“best practice” examples from abroad (the argument “nowhere else do minorities have a right to tertiary education in their mother tongue”). The international community was, conditionally speaking, stuck between the two: it could not deny the human rights issue the Albanians were raising (especially having in mind the human rights violations and repression against the Albanian population happening in Kosovo); on the other hand, it could not pressure the Macedonian government to violate the republic’s constitution. This is why the early involvement of the international community, in particular the Council of Europe, was concentrated on pushing toward changes in the legal framework that would allow for a more solid case for Albanian minority rights, including the right to higher education in their mother tongue.

However, the Macedonian government was not willing to make this sort of concession just yet. The establishment of the University of Tetovo did not help in this regard, as it was seen as deliberate provocation by the Albanian community and thus made the Macedonian political actors even less willing to include anything resembling this within the state framework. Instead, it focused on legislative reform and the reopening of the facilities for teacher training—again, keeping the minority issue strictly within the confines of the state. The shift in the conceptualization of minority rights is, perhaps, best exemplified by the introduction of quotas for minority groups in higher education in 1996/97. Although focusing on minority representation in institutions of higher education, the quotas still did very little to increase access to or attainment of higher education, let alone subsequent employment. More importantly, they also more or less heralded the future of Macedonia as an effectively consociational state, based on a power-sharing agreement between the two dominant ethnic groups.

The conflict in Kosovo and its spillover to Macedonia eventually enabled the transition to a power-sharing regime. The provisions of the Ohrid Framework Agreement established the equal representation of all minorities constituting over 20% of the population (which, in practice, meant only Albanians) as a guarantee of future stability and post-conflict development. This also transformed the context in which claims to minority rights in education could be framed. Namely, whereas before the 2001 conflict and the OFA, Albanians constituted a minority in Macedonia, after it they became a constituent nation,

with guaranteed representation in state institutions and the right to use their mother tongue as an official language. This also meant that, in higher education, their status shifted. Previously, they had been a minority whose demands were “accommodated.” After the OFA they became equal political actors, who could run their own higher education institutions.

Some Albanian control over higher education was effectively implemented with the legislative changes in 2004, when the University of Tetovo became fully integrated into the network of public higher education institutions funded by the state. Although “purged” of some of the more politically radical elements and with the addition of the mandatory element of education in the Macedonian language, the State University of Tetovo is still predominantly seen as an Albanian higher education institution, for the Albanian community in Macedonia. In this sense, it fully corresponds to the power sharing principle: out of three public universities, two (University of Skopje and University of Bitola) are predominantly “Macedonian,” whereas the SUT is predominantly “Albanian.”

The South East European University, on the other hand, reflects the ideas of the international community in terms of minority integration. Although actively participating in the creation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, most of international actors never felt quite easy about its power-sharing consequences, probably because of the societal divisions such arrangements tend to reinforce. Thus, although initially planned as the “solution” to the issue of higher education in the Albanian language, SEEU developed into an institution which is probably closest to the multicultural vision of minority integration. In this model, language streams exist separately, with clearly delineated boundaries, but they are nevertheless encouraged to learn each other’s languages and interact to a certain point. The joint framework is established through the “international” dimension of SEEU, emphasizing English language teaching, and personal and international cooperation. In a sense, SEEU is an almost perfect reflection of the international community’s vision of the Macedonian society: with two separate ethnic groups, each enjoying their own rights, interacting to a certain point, but all the time overseen and controlled by an external, international power. In this sense, the “international” context—regard-

less of whether it is exemplified in globalization, transition to market economy, European integration, or any combination of the three—is seen as the framework for the “containment” of the inherent nationalism of both sides.

4.4.11. Conclusions: Separate and (un)equal?

This explains why there are two universities in Tetovo with significantly overlapping programs. Although, from the perspective of student numbers, it would make perfect sense to have only one university, it is not the “objective” or “rational” needs that determine the configuration of the higher education system. On the contrary, the current layout reflects closely the power-sharing arrangement in Macedonian politics. In this perspective, both dominant ethnic groups have “their” institutions of higher education: ethnic Macedonians have universities Skopje and Bitola, whereas ethnic Albanians have the State University of Tetovo. SEEU, in this sense, represents the international community and its concept of interethnic relations.

At the same time, this indicates that the current institutional configuration is not likely to change in the near future. Given that the political balance of powers in Macedonia will probably remain stable, it is reasonable to assume that the two universities in Tetovo will remain in place for at least some years to come. The only thing that could substantially alter the current configuration would be a significant shift in the power-sharing arrangement in Macedonian politics; however, it doesn’t appear likely such a change will happen soon, given that power-sharing regimes have an inherent stability based on subsuming conflicts within the biggest parties and the elimination of all external contenders.

The problem with this sort of arrangement is that it hardly lends itself to integration. On the contrary, the power-sharing arrangements tend to support the further separation of the public sphere into two dominant “blocs,” whose members rarely interact and communicate. The current university configuration not only reflects, but also supports this form of division. Thus, Macedonia remains another society where higher education reflects existing social divisions, and does not appear likely to transform or subvert them.

4.5. Conclusions: From Education to Fragmentation... and Back?

This chapter analyzed three cases of university development in the societies of former Yugoslavia that emerged from the conflicts related to its dissolution. Of course, to what extent the conflicts in the region are over, frozen, or actually seething below the political surface, is a different question and one that cannot be answered here. However, the classification of these societies as “divided” or “post-conflict,” continues, to a great extent, to define the political and social dynamics in these parts of former Yugoslavia.

Although frequently pushed to the back or obscured by the focus on “Europeanization” and convergence, the post-conflict dimension has played a significant role in the development of higher education institutions and policies in the successor states of former Yugoslavia. This was done both directly (through the involvement of international organizations in liberal peace- or stability-building) and indirectly (through human and minority rights standards, “soft diplomacy,” and conditionalities related to, for instance, EU accession). The context of international supervision also raised the stakes of “ethnic bargaining” (cf. Jenne 2007), resulting in novel political configurations, such as national minority councils or consociational arrangements.

However, this does not necessarily imply that the international involvement (or the possibility of it) is the core aspect determining the institutional configuration of higher education. On the contrary, the analysis in this chapter aimed to show that local political dynamics and power divisions are, in fact, at least as important in shaping the models and approaches to higher education in the region. The resulting institutional configurations, thus, come out of the complex interplay of different actors and their changing political agendas, which converge and intersect in specific historical and social contexts. The theory of “passive revolution” (Gramsci 1999 [1971]) mentioned in the introduction to this chapter helps understand the dynamics of these processes. From this point of view, specific policies aimed at social and political transformation, although they can be “pushed” by external actors, get appropriated and driven by local elites in an attempt to secure or consolidate power. In this context, international “interven-

tion” in the domain of education should not be seen as a completely independent from the local dynamics: on the contrary, it is always mediated by the local political actors, their agendas and strategies.

Barnett and Zurcher similarly argue that policy dynamics in post-conflict environments do not follow the simple logic of “transfer,” but that “the degree and form of local and international control over political power are negotiated between local and international elites. Local actors do not simply give up control over political power, making peacebuilding a process of negotiation between them and their international counterparts.” In this process, “liberal political ideals of external agents are not fully realised, but international ‘peacebuilders’ mainly transfer the ceremonies and symbols of the liberal-democratic state. The end product is a hybrid political arrangement” (Barnett and Zurcher 2009, 24). The universities analyzed in this chapter, thus, are themselves hybrid political arrangements. Although they all originated in the context of post-conflict development, local political contexts still left a decisive “imprint” on their configuration.

Higher education in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia became linked to the issue of ethnic mobilization during the 1960s, when protests of ethnic Albanians resulted in the establishment of the University of Prishtina in Kosovo. This was the reason why the University of Prishtina and its students were, at the same time, the focus of repression by the increasingly assimilationist regime of Slobodan Milošević, and the locus of opposition. The struggles around the University of Prishtina during the 1990s reflected a transformation from the multicultural approach to ethnic differences, which, at least on paper, characterized former Yugoslavia, towards a progressively more monoethnic model of the Serbian-dominated state that was established in its ruins. This model lent support to the increased state repression against the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo, which eventually ended with the NATO intervention in 1999.

After the intervention, the configuration changed: Kosovo was now officially governed by the UN administration that brought along its own concepts of minority integration, and the role of higher education in it. Serbs, who now constituted an ethnic minority, were concentrated in the north of Kosovo, where the Serbian students and staff from the University of Prishtina eventually settled after the regime change in Serbia in 2000. The international administration,

after a while, started considering this new “parallel” university—the “University of Prishtina temporarily located in Kosovska Mitrovica”—as the solution to the question of access for the Serbian minority to higher education in their mother tongue. However, the change of government in Serbia in 2004 brought more right-leaning parties into power, resulting in a new rector for the UPKM and a stronger institutional identification with the defense of “Serbian national interests” in Kosovo. Kosovo’s declaration of independence in 2008 exacerbated this division, as the Serbian government vowed to dispute it and the newly independent Kosovar public administration turned its attention towards more “cooperative” minorities, such as Bosniaks, Turks, and Roma. Thus, the configuration of higher education in Kosovo came to reflect, on the one hand, the “frozen conflict” morphed into the dispute of statehood between Serbia and Kosovo and Serbia’s continued assertion of its rule in the north, and, on the other, the need for the Kosovo administration to display high commitment to the standards of minority rights, while maintaining its sovereignty and control over the education sector.

In this context, the consecutive education policies in Kosovo, dating from the breakup of former Yugoslavia, over the conflict in Kosovo and NATO intervention, and until the declaration of Kosovo’s independence, should be seen as parts of the overlapping projects of nation-, identity-, and state-building. Throughout the period, these policies were driven by political concerns, more than any education- or rights-related issues. Of course, the particular political concerns in Kosovo are related to the position and relative powers of ethnic groups, and thus specific groups primarily exercise them through the question of the access to, and control of, education institutions.

The same political dynamics that influenced the configuration of higher education in Kosovo were at play in Sandžak, but on a smaller scale. The development of higher education in Sandžak is tied to the regime change in Serbia after 2000, when the liberal government led by Zoran Đinđić endorsed minority recognition as a way of differentiating itself from the legacy of the Milošević regime and, at the same time, winning political support of minority political actors. In this context, the entrepreneurial Mufti Zukorlić was allowed to open the International University of Novi Pazar, which, although officially a secular institution, primarily catered to Bosniak Muslims in the

region and beyond. At the time, the state considered extending financial support to this private institution. However, after the change of government in 2004 a new political configuration emerged, which sought to discredit Mufti and give legitimacy to a different political option, one that was more acceptable to Serb nationalists in Belgrade. As a price for this support, the government pledged to open a public university, dubbed the State University of Novi Pazar, and extended public funding to it. Since then, the two universities have been in a bitter rivalry that reflects the rivalry between Bosniak Muslim political parties and their struggle for influence over Sandžak.

The Macedonian case combines some characteristics of both the Kosovo and Sandžak cases, with a number of specificities. The issue of Albanian-language higher education in Macedonia is fundamentally entwined both with the situation in Kosovo, and with the project of Macedonian statebuilding following the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Whereas the initial Albanian demands for access to higher education in the mother tongue could have been connected with the loss of opportunity to study at the University of Prishtina related to the worsening security situation and increased Serb state repression in Kosovo, the issue quickly morphed into the question of the position of Albanians as a minority and/or constitutive nation in the newly independent Macedonian state.

At the time, the majority of ethnic Macedonians regarded the state as monoethnic. Thus, requests for Albanian-language higher education were rejected or limited by relatively narrow interpretations of the constitution and other legal acts. The establishment of the University of Tetovo in 1994 was accordingly interpreted as separatism and rebellion against the state, provoking a violent incident. This, however, brought the attention of the international community—primarily the OSCE—to the issue. In the ensuing years, the situation revolved around pressures from the international community to change the law in a way that would provide space for more concessions to the Albanian community. However, Macedonians, and in particular different right-wing groups, saw the extension of rights to higher education in a language other than Macedonian as a potential threat to the concept of a monoethnic state. Within this framework, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities began developing a plan for a private higher education institution that would comprise teaching in Macedonian,

Albanian, and English. Clearly, the idea was to make higher education for Albanians possible, while still satisfying the constitutional requirement for Macedonian as the language of instruction in higher education. English-language teaching as well as the private status of the institution were introduced in order to justify stronger international involvement, and, potentially, as the “bridging” factor between the two communities. However, the plan did not manage to prevent the conflict, which erupted as a result of the growing tensions between the communities exacerbated by the Kosovo crisis in 2001.

The resolution of the conflict was a power-sharing arrangement between the Macedonian and the Albanian communities, contained in the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA). The aftermath of the conflict provided the financial impetus for the completion of the OSCE HCNM project, and the South East European University (SEEU) was inaugurated in 2001. However, the OFA, as a consociational arrangement, also opened the door for pursuing the “old” agenda of Albanian political parties, which was the claim to state-financed higher education in the Albanian language. Finally, the change of government in Macedonia in 2004, which brought the representative of one of the new Albanian parties into the position of the Minister of Education, made this possible. What happened was the transformation of the previously “illegal” University of Tetovo into the publicly-funded State University of Tetovo. At the same time, SEEU remained in place, although—with the change of government in 2008—also claiming some state funding through the form of “public-private partnership.” Given the ubiquity of the divisions between Albanian and Macedonian political parties in present-day Macedonia, and the fact that this power-sharing agreement was brokered by the international community and thus has its full support, it is almost certain that the situation in terms of university configuration will not change substantially.

The “ethnic” universities, in a manner of speaking, represent the last stage in the transformation of education policies in former Yugoslavia and its successor states. They mark the transition from class-based to almost exclusively identity-based projects. The political contestation that surrounded the development of these universities revolved around two main issues. One is the question of what is the proper form for the education of ethnic minorities, and the other is whether this can (or should) be achieved in the framework of the state,

and how. The political actors involved in these processes, even when they framed these questions in the broader issue of human rights, nevertheless in reality focused on specific ethnic groups, as clearly demarcated and fixed identity groups. Even internal political contestation, such as that occurring in Novi Pazar, had to do with the question of who has the right to represent the ethnic group in political processes.

This does not mean, however, that issues previously associated with class have, all of a sudden, magically disappeared. Access to education (including higher education) remains problematic for the lower social strata, and higher education institutions still tend to reproduce social inequalities. Some policies, primarily those related to student welfare, address these issues. However, even in these cases, they are frequently wrapped in identity concerns. For instance, the question of poverty is increasingly addressed through policies that aim to ensure the equal representation of Roma in higher education. Although the Roma, as a group, are both discriminated and underrepresented, this form of unreflexive conflation of class and identity both ignores the fact that not all Roma live in substandard conditions and obscures the growing numbers of “white” population living on the brink of poverty, whose living standards combined with the growing cost of higher education, will probably make it very difficult for their children to access universities.

Of course, this chapter does not wish to argue that the recognition of group rights or needs in education policies is obsolete or unnecessary. The question of affirmative action, quotas, and other forms of addressing the representation of minorities are certainly deserving of further elaboration in the case of former Yugoslavia. The issue, however, is that these options, even in the cases where they exist, are rarely considered as possible alternatives to the institutional arrangements described here. Separate universities catering to different ethnic groups seem to be solutions preferable to equal representation of different groups across institutions.

This conclusion, in part, reflects the reality of “divided societies.” In part, however, it points to the potential of “ethnic universities” to reproduce and deepen the societal cleavages created by conflict. In this sense, they become instruments of further fragmentation, which can lead to the virtual “pillarization” of society. This means that the society becomes structured around vertical divisions—with each of the parts

representing a separate and “sealed off” whole. These parts evolve separate and fragmented public spheres, which, in turn, make the communication and deliberation across these lines more difficult, if not outright impossible.

This, at the same time, represents perhaps the most important implication of “ethnic universities” in divided societies. By legitimizing their existence through catering to the needs of distinct groups divided by vertical lines (such as ethnic groups), they can suppress the conflicts and tensions related to horizontal divisions—including those traditionally thought of as class. Simply put, these universities can reproduce social inequalities, but within a specific ethnic group. They can contribute to the development of social elites divided along ethnic lines. In sum, they can end up reproducing—and adding novel forms to—the same divisions and inequalities that education reforms in socialist Yugoslavia tried, in vain, to eradicate.

This chapter has completed the “circle” of education reforms in former Yugoslavia, showing how they evolved from the focus on class, to the consolidation of policies based on ethnic identity or belonging that characterize some parts of its successor states at present. The concluding chapter of this book will offer a comparative overview of this transformation, as well as some thoughts on the lessons they provide for understanding and designing education policies today.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion: Education after Yugoslavia

In 1969, Theodor Adorno wrote: “The premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again” (Adorno 1998 [1969]). He was looking back not only at the Holocaust and the horrors of the World War II, but also at the return to public life of some of the generals and soldiers who ordered and committed them, suggesting that legal proceedings could never be sufficient to redress the legacy of the war (cf. Cho 2009). This led him to the question: how to design public policies and institutions that would prevent WWII horrors from repeating? “Every debate about the ideals of education,” wrote Adorno, “is trivial and inconsequential compared to this single ideal: never again Auschwitz.” Although the conflict in former Yugoslavia never reached the scale of the World War II, the camps scattered across its territory—Srebrenica, Omarska, Keraterm, Konjic, Gabela, Llapusnik, Vojno, Vilina Vlas, Heliodrom, and others—are reminders that discussions about education policies fade in the face of the moral imperative to address its role in and relationship to the conflict.

It is no surprise that Adorno focused on education as the potential instrument to prevent conflict. As a representative of the Frankfurt School, he believed in the Enlightenment legacy of education: its capacity to foster rational thinking and dispel prejudice. Even if one does not subscribe to Enlightenment ideals, education still warrants consideration as one of the most powerful social practices. It reaches millions of people, many from a very early moment in their lives, and

thus has an immense influence on the ways humans think about and behave in the world. Beyond this, it plays a significant role in determining the life course and relative position of individuals in the social structure: differences in educational attainment correspond not only to social status, wealth, and quality of life, but also to health, civic engagement, and inclusion.

This does not mean, however, that just being able to access education makes a difference. As we could see from the previous chapters, education can be used for different purposes: some of them include pursuing these goals, but just for one social group, however defined; in other cases, education can explicitly be used to exclude and repress individuals and groups that do not conform to the dominant order. Former Yugoslavia stands out as a particularly useful example through which to challenge the assumption of the direct links between education and the absence of conflict. Levels of education in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia were high and continued growing virtually until the very moment the country collapsed—and when it did, it disintegrated in a conflict that, although not reaching the proportions of the Holocaust, nevertheless made many observers recall WWII. Even after the war, some education policies in the successor states of former Yugoslavia continued reproducing the social cleavages manifested in the conflict.

Between the “emancipatory” and “reproductive” roles of education, this book argued that education is intrinsically *neither*. In other words, just like other public policies, education has the potential to both reproduce and change the existing order. Education is not a simple practice of “knowledge transfer”: on the contrary, it entails the active construction and structuring of political identities and subjectivities. Some of these can be conducive to the maintenance of the status quo, but some can challenge and even change existing power relations. This is why education policies generate controversy and always attract a lot of contestation: politicians, policymakers, and, last but not least, the “general public,” understand that what is at stake in education is not just the present but also the future.

Contrary to the paradigms such as historical “inevitability,” or manifestation of “ancient ethnic hatreds,” both of which had been, at different times, used to explain the dissolution of Yugoslavia, this book argued that the history of education reforms during the second half

of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century can be understood as a consequence of specific decisions and political strategies, employed by different actors, at certain historical moments or “critical junctures.” In this sense, the transition from class-based to identity politics in the education policies in the post-Yugoslav space *is not* (just) *a consequence* of the processes of ethnic mobilization, dissolution, and, later, post-conflict development, that brought questions of identity and belonging to the forefront of decision-making. Education policies are *not* the passive, “receiving end” of these social processes. They played, and continue to play, an important role in defining these processes. In other words, education—just like other public policies—is actively involved in the shaping of political identities and modes of agency that, in turn, play a role in social and political dynamics of societies.

The cases analyzed in this book aimed to provide a “meso-level” perspective on these processes. Rather than looking just at the “big picture” or at the “micropolitics” of education as everyday practice, the book aspired to connect these two levels by showing how they interact, clash, and converge in the processes of education policy-making. Education policy is neither isolated from the global social and political trends, nor reducible to them. This book shows how these processes interact with and are reflected in the politics of education reforms; how specific actors interpret, transform and apply them, and by doing this, give shape to novel institutional and political configurations. By focusing on the fundamental interrelatedness of public policies and social and historical processes, the book argued that looking at the ways in which they were embedded in education reforms during a particularly tumultuous period of Yugoslav history can help us achieve a better understanding of both.

In the period analyzed here, education policies in former Yugoslavia underwent two important and related changes. One concerns the political context, where decision-making in the classical sense became increasingly replaced by a “lighter,” expert-dominated mode—in other words, shifting from “governing” to “governance.” The other concerns change in the definition of the political subject that is the target of education policies. Whereas policymaking in socialist Yugoslavia focused primarily on class, the aftermath of the dissolution saw a decisive shift towards ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities as the basis of policy-making. The transformation “from class to identity,” as in the title of

this book, is not just a reflection of the political transition in the successor states in former Yugoslavia. Essentially, it concerns the changing nature (or structure) of political subjectivities, and the ways in which they are recognized and accommodated in the public sphere. As a consequence, it also concerns the structure and mode of political agency in the successor states of former Yugoslavia. Combined with the shift from “government to governance,” it offers the contours of the fundamental transformation of political identities taking place during the transition from socialism to capitalism.

This chapter will first offer a summary and a comparative overview of these changes, placing them in the context of global transformation of education. After that, in the concluding part, it will offer some thoughts on what these changes mean for the future of education policies—“after Yugoslavia” and beyond.

5.1. Shifting Framework: From Government to Governance

As repeatedly asserted in this book, education policies cannot be understood outside of their specific political contexts. The respective political contexts of the three instances of education reforms analyzed here—vocation-oriented education, religious education, and “ethnic” universities in post-conflict societies—are substantially different. Between 1960 and 2010, the political structure of the territory once known as Yugoslavia underwent important changes. First, in response to popular unrests at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of 1970s, the constitution of 1974 transformed it from a relatively centralized union of six republics into a “loose” federation, which some critics claimed was closer to a confederation, of six republics and two autonomous provinces. This was the political setting of the first education reform analyzed in this book, the vocation-oriented education. Following the further escalation of the crisis, the country began disintegrating—first, with the secession of Slovenia and Croatia, then with Bosnia. Seven new countries have emerged from the Yugoslav conflict, although the statehood of Kosovo is still disputed, and Bosnia and Herzegovina sometimes appears as if on the brink of dissolution. Nevertheless, all of former constituent parts now have (at least nomi-

nally) democratically elected governments, and, with the exception of Kosovo, all participate in international organizations such as the UN and the Council of Europe. Slovenia and Croatia are members of the European Union, and others are oriented towards EU membership as well.

The changed political environment means that the policy contexts of the education reforms analyzed in this book differed substantially from each other. However, this does not mean that there was no continuity between them. On the contrary, as this book attempted to argue, specific policies tend to follow path dependencies established before them—though not always in straight or clear ways. The following part will first summarize these approaches, and then point to both similarities and major differences between them.

It is commonly assumed that the ideological and political setting for education in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia was rather constrained. A general and rather orthodox version of Marxism provided the general framework. Policy trajectories were most frequently defined as top-down, which meant that the top echelons of the federal bureaucracy were in charge of designing policies, while the lower administrative strata had the task of interpreting and implementing them: the whole vocation-oriented education reform is thought of as the “brainchild” of a single man, Croat politician Stipe Šušar. “Policy borrowing” did exist on some level, but it was used primarily for the ideological vetting of general policy directions—if a policy had been implemented in some of the other communist or socialist countries, this was frequently deemed sufficient to consider its translation into the local context.

Ideological interpretation of the problems of education directly translated into specific policy solutions and instruments, such as the abolishment of the institutional division between programs leading to the labor market and those leading to further education. There was very little discussion on whether these solutions were, indeed, the most fitting for the identified problems—a failing economy and a persistent social class differentiation within the country—or, for that matter, whether the “diagnosis” of the problem itself was correct. The only times when policies were, in fact, evaluated, was when they explicitly failed at delivering the promised results. Reasons were usually found in the “misunderstanding” or “unpreparedness” among those who were

supposed to implement them. Thus it was easy to attribute the failure of vocation-oriented education to schools and factories, which were supposed to carry the gist of the reform.

This, however, does not imply that the policy process was entirely undemocratic. Lengthy discussions, at different levels of the League of Communists, preceded the formulation of policies. Especially following the introduction of self-management, the regime made conscious efforts to involve more representatives of local communities in the implementation of reforms. Criticism of the modes and successes of policy implementation was both allowed and encouraged—overall, communist political organizations paid a lot of reverence to the concept of “self-criticism,” which entailed a careful examination of one’s own weaknesses and propositions for future improvement (cf. Salecl 1994). The only aspect that was not susceptible to criticism was the ideological framework: one could not question the supremacy of the working class, nor the need to orient all policies towards the fulfillment of its historical struggle. Political actors and social movements that attempted to do so were dealt with swiftly and sometimes rather brutally.

The political framework in post-Milošević Serbia after 2000 was, on the surface, substantially different from the preceding period. One-party system was replaced by political pluralism. The process of designing policies, for the first time, included the contribution and participation of different social actors or “stakeholders.” Policy directions and instruments were publicly debated, although with the tendency of legitimization of different solutions primarily in the context of “European integration.” In other words, specific instruments or policies were frequently validated through the concepts of “borrowing” or “transfer” of “best practice” from the more developed European countries.

The “Europeanization” of the policy process, however, did not necessarily make it more democratic. As we could see in the Chapter 3 of this book, the introduction of religious and civic education was a more-or-less single-handed act of the Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić. This aspect of education reform completely ignored the debates concerning the issue of religious education raging in the Serbian public at the time. Similarly, the initiative to abolish religious education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is commonly thought of as the act of a specific politician, Emir Suljagić. Although, of course, just like in the case of vocation-oriented education, policies are hardly ever the

product of one person only, the important thing is that these processes circumvent the public aspect of policymaking.

The “democratic public” is implicitly present in the design of these policies, but not as an active participant. Rather, it is an “imagined,” passive recipient that has characteristics—such as supposed political or ideological preferences used to inform the content of policies—but does not really have a voice. This means that although officially democratic and decentralized, the process of policymaking in post-Yugoslav states more frequently resembles a clientelist arrangement in which governments “reward” certain groups in exchange for their (past or prospective) political support. This, for instance, is the case with religious education in Serbia being introduced to reward the Serbian Orthodox Church for its support to the opposition of Milošević in the second half of the 1990s, as well as with civic education, which was introduced in order to appeal to the “civic” part of the same opposition. However, the “upper hand” in all cases remains with the government, who not only dispenses “favors” but also, through this process, legitimizes specific social divisions and boundaries—such as those between the “first” and the “second” Serbia—as the basis for policymaking.

This type of logic is developed to what could be considered an extreme in the third part of this book. Besides the state, the policymaking landscape now featured politically mobilized ethnic groups and the international community, present not only in the context of EU integration, but also within the peacekeeping and post-conflict development mandates related to the legacy of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. In this framework, governments still have the primary role in designing (or supporting) educational policies, but other actors are frequently not satisfied with just accepting (or rejecting) what the government offers. Rather, they formulate specific requests and develop their own initiatives related to education.

In the case of ethnic groups, these initiatives can range from the right to access to the establishment of separate institutions or parallel systems. The form and the development of these initiatives depend on the political and historical context, and especially on the ways in which governments treat them. At the same time, ethnic groups do not appear as unitary actors. Political cleavages within different ethnic groups can come to bear substantially on the choice of policies or solutions that respective parties will advocate. The clearest example of this

sort of dynamic are the dueling political fractions in Novi Pazar, each of which, though at different points in time, managed to secure governmental support for their own visions of higher education for Bosniaks in Sandžak.

On the other hand, both the state and political parties act in an increasingly internationalized environment, giving rise to what Chandler (2010) dubbed “post-liberal governance.” In the context of European integration, “transition,” and liberal peacebuilding, policies no longer relate only to local political dynamics, but are increasingly evaluated in relation to international standards and criteria. This means that international organizations come to occupy a more prominent role and, in some cases, even take the lead in the design of policies. For instance, in the case of Macedonia, education policies were seen as directly linked to the question of minority rights and thus to the preservation of peace. This allowed the international community, particularly the OSCE, to assume a stronger role in their development. Of course, international organizations are also not “unitary” or coherent actors. They come with different—and frequently opposing—concepts of the role of education and its relation to development, which often end up in competition for influence over a particular post-conflict zone between different international organizations (cf. Polman 2010).

The plurality of political actors, thus, did and does not necessarily lead to a more democratic process of policymaking. International organizations and other actors can try to “bury” political tensions underneath technical or legal issues, in an attempt to persuade different local actors to develop consensus around certain points. Although sometimes successful in producing solutions to urgent problems, this shift “from government to governance” (cf. Bellamy and Palumbo 2010) tends to obscure the political dynamics on the ground level. Another problem is that these political dynamics have the inconvenient habit of “resurfacing” later and jeopardizing fragile consensus; the other is that it perpetuates the role of international organizations as external guarantors, thus further eroding the sovereignty of the state. This is particularly curious given that these processes are frequently externally justified as parts of “statebuilding” efforts.

This sort of dynamic, for instance, could be observed in the case of the transformation of the University of Tetovo into the State University of Tetovo, and in the continued challenges to the relationship

between this institution and the South East European University in the same town. On the other hand, this framework also poses substantial constraints to the agency of local or domestic actors. Ethnic political parties tend to mobilize around identity-based agendas, which may provide a venue for the exercise of group rights, but tend to ignore or block any political concern that cannot be integrated into this framework. Thus, education policies in these contexts tend to become tied to the projects of identity- or nation-building, while avoiding or leaving behind issues related to quality, roles, or purposes of education.

Governments, in contrast, tend to approach education from a mixture of highly technical and highly politicized perspectives. On the one hand, they view education policies as strategies for “handling” minority claims. Specific strategies can range from containment to accommodation: outright repression, such as in Kosovo during the 1990s, is luckily—or hopefully—not acceptable any more. The choice of these specific strategies, however, is rarely driven by a coherent ideology or a vision of society. Much more often, it is based on the assessment of the steps necessary in order to ensure the support for reforms or other projects. This is why consecutive governments in Serbia were able to support the formation of two universities in Novi Pazar, each of which were meant to provide support for a specific political party. This is also why the government in Macedonia was able to support the foundation of the South East European University, and, after the change of leadership at the Ministry of Education, also support the “legalization” of the University of Tetovo in the same town. On the other hand, governments use externally legitimized reforms in order to push forward specific political goals. This was the case with the 1996 Milošević–Rugova agreement, which used international conflict prevention efforts to legitimize a policy of ethnic segregation. It is also the case with the legal criteria for accreditation, as in the University of Kosovska Mitrovica and the International University in Novi Pazar. In these cases it is clear that regulatory instruments, such as systems of quality assurance, are only the “extended hand” of other political actors, which use purportedly technical criteria in order to facilitate the adoption or implementation of specific measures.

During the period covered in this book, the political framework in which education policies were developed underwent a dual change. On the one hand, it became more diversified and plural, with a growing

number of actors taking part (or, at least, being able to claim part) in defining and implementing education policies. On the other hand, it did not necessarily become more democratic: the shift from government to governance and, particularly, to post-liberal governance means that political issues are beginning to fall into the background. Alternatively, when they “surface” or stay visible, they are reduced to identity bargaining, which leaves very limited space for the formulation, argumentation, and discussion of policy agendas that are not reducible to the exercise of group rights. This means that the political space in which education policies are imagined, constructed, narrated, and criticized is simultaneously shrinking and becoming increasingly fragmented. Discussions of education policies today tend to take place either on the top levels of governmental or intergovernmental bureaucracy, or in highly specialized forums of experts or political representatives. It is not only the public sphere (as in divided and polarized societies) or the institutional framework (as in the case of “ethnic” universities) that are becoming fragmented; increasingly, and correspondingly, it is the practice of education policymaking itself.

Although perhaps more visible or prominent in the post-Yugoslav space, the change in modes of policymaking is a global trend, and, on top of that, not the only aspect of education that was fundamentally transformed during the course of the last fifty years. In order to understand the changing role of education in post-Yugoslavia, we also need to look at another important change. This change concerns the form of the political subject addressed by education and, thus, the changing concepts of the role of education as such.

5.2. Shifting Focus: From Class to Identity

Politics in socialist Yugoslavia was primarily oriented towards the emancipation of the working class. Education policies, accordingly, were designed in order to allow for the class mobility of the strata identified as underrepresented—workers and, to some extent, peasants. When it became evident that, despite the official egalitarian ideology, socialism had not managed to stop class reproduction, policies became explicitly aimed at reversing the class inequalities through education. On the one hand were affirmative policies, primarily for the descen-

dants of workers and peasants. On the other hand—in particular after the student protests in former Yugoslavia—there was the implicit “negative” selection, aimed at reducing the representation and influence of those of “bourgeois” and intellectual background in institutions of higher education. At the same time, there were attempts to deal with “dissenting” ideologies, nationalist as well as liberal. On the one hand, this was done through direct political intervention: Tito purged the League of Communists from anyone who could have been identified with dissenting views. A more long-term strategy, however, was reflected in the vocation-oriented education reform.

Policymakers, educated in a peculiar form of Marxism-Leninism, understood all conflicts as emanating from the economic base; the roots of nationalism, thus, were seen in the economic inequalities between republics of the former Yugoslavia. The cure to nationalism was seen in ensuring economic development and combatting unemployment, which, particularly, was seen as the source of social discontent. This is why the vocation-oriented education reform focused on links with the productive sector, which, it was thought, would at the same time boost the economy and provide direct employment to secondary school graduates, while weakening universities as “bastions” of both the bourgeoisie and of social discontent as such. In this sense, it was a partial success. It did not manage to boost employment to the extent necessary to recover the Yugoslav economy, nor to inspire young people to choose work instead of further education. However, it did succeed in suppressing large-scale popular unrest erupting at universities—until the beginning of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia.

The period of the dissolution brought about the (re)nationalization of education (cf. Wachtel and Marković 2008). During this period, textbooks and other forms of educational discourse focused on the elevation of the nation, and, frequently, on the downplaying of both the “Others” as such and the shared heritage of socialist Yugoslavia. Many textbooks in the post-Yugoslav states still bear the marks of these times. However, they, after all, need to be understood in the context of the processes of nation- and state-building. This means that, although nationalist elements are important, making them the exclusive focus of analysis can mask or obscure other processes that are taking place. For instance, it is frequently claimed that the ideological “vacuum” left behind by communism was “filled in” by nationalism.

The education reform in post-Milošević Serbia, however, offers a different lesson.

In the period after the regime change, nationalism was just one of the ideologies that were used to justify specific political agendas. The democratic government identified religious (and, by extension, ethnic) identities as “proxies” for political and ideological orientations. The conflation of identity and policy in the introduction of religious education was thus a primarily symbolic practice, which strove to build political consensus, rather than engage with the issue of collective identities as such. This, in a way, is a curious emanation of a liberal political ideology: identities were important only to the extent to which they represented metaphors of political orientations. Thus, the prime purpose of education and other public policies was to ensure political consensus; everything else, including engaging with the legacy of the recent past, was deemed less relevant.

On the surface, education policies developed during that period were not particularly concerned with class. Although the discourse of equality did figure in education, it was mostly based on identitarian categories: policies that targeted the Roma or women as groups. Class did not completely disappear, but it became masked or supplanted by categories of different order: at best, it was transposed into the rather apolitical notion of “socio-economically disadvantaged.” On the other hand, class featured silently in the introduction of religious and civic education in Serbia: it was reflected in the distinction between values attached to the ideological constructs of the “first” and the “second” Serbia. Education policies in post-Milošević Serbia, thus, offer an example of how categories of class were transposed to categories of identity in the process of policymaking. Both were present, but class was “hidden” behind identity, which, similarly to other post-communist countries, became the most salient and most visible political category (cf. Kalb and Halmai 2011).

The development of “ethnic” universities in the divided societies of post-Yugoslavia represents, in a sense, the logical end of this process. In the public sphere, ethnic identities have become synonymous with political agendas: all politics became ethnic politics. Thus, different modes of accommodation of ethnoreligious identities form the core of these developments. Of course, not all actors involved in the policymaking processes had the same idea of how to accommodate

specific group identities in education. Concepts of expression, segregation, and integration have all, at different points in time, become embedded in the institutional arrangements in these parts of former Yugoslavia. Regardless of specific forms higher education assumed, however, they all reflected the assumption that ethnic, religious, and cultural identities should serve as the main basis of policymaking.

The consolidation of ethnoreligious identities has a tendency to suppress intra-group differences, while emphasizing those between groups. This means that education policies aimed at the accommodation of specific group identities in former Yugoslavia did not pay a lot of attention to categories such as class. The assumption seemed to be that group interests are reducible to identity-related claims—that all Albanians want the same education, all Serbs the same schoolbooks, and all Bosniaks the same universities. The intra-group conflicts that surfaced in the process, like, for instance, in the case of Sandžak, were primarily related to the struggle over which political party would acquire the right to represent the entire group, and not to the idea that there might be lines of political division or mobilization more important or powerful than the identitarian.

Again, this does not mean that the processes related to features and dynamics usually associated with the category of “class” are absent or irrelevant for the understanding of political dynamics of post-Yugoslavia. But, at least in the post-conflict environments, they have become completely overtaken by categories related to identity. As a matter of fact, an almost reverse process has occurred: while the education of specific ethnoreligious groups in former Yugoslavia was often framed in the discourse of class emancipation, in the current successors of former Yugoslavia socio-economic issues are frequently framed in the language of minority rights. Given that many members of minority groups indeed live in substandard conditions, the policies frequently address this problem by targeting the group *as a whole*, rather than those who actually need it.

This problem frequently becomes emphasized by opponents of group-based policies, who claiming that, for instance, affirmative measures aimed at the Roma as a group would allow even those Roma who are not “objectively” disadvantaged to gain privileged access to education. This, however, is usually a false argument that tends to hide general animosity towards the group; in reality, “freeriders” on

affirmative policies, especially in the post-Yugoslav states, are not very likely to appear in numbers that warrant concern. However, there is a much more realistic and relevant implication that group-based policies have for both equality and broader social and political dynamics. It is the fact that group-based policies can hardly address the question of power relationships and inequalities *within* the group. This means that group-based policies can actually create or reinforce the dominance of political elites, who obtain legitimization through the right to represent the group and negotiate on its behalf. In this case, social inequalities are reproduced despite the fact that these policies frequently utilize the discourse of equal rights.

In this sense, the process that could be observed in post-2000 Serbia could become transposed and multiplied. Political elites appropriate and manipulate the claims for equal participation and representation in education, but the difference is that now there are multiple political elites: each ethnoreligious group has “its” own. This, however, does not necessarily result in democratic pluralism. On the contrary, political elites can continue to dominate the agenda, as well as to use the plurality of public spheres to maintain political influence. Thus, although the number of actors has multiplied, processes of policy-making have not necessarily become more open and inclusive.

5.3. Continuity and Change

The transformation of education policies in former Yugoslavia happened along two axes. The first concerns the political structure in which policies are made. From a relatively centralized policymaking dominated by the organs of the communist party, the landscape became more diversified, today featuring a variety of local, regional, national, and international actors with different mandates and missions. However, as we could see, this network does not necessarily lend itself to a more democratic concept of policymaking. In the fragmented political space, the expression of ideas and agendas in the sphere of education became limited to either seemingly “technical” issues, or, alternatively, to claims for recognition or accommodation of specific identities in the overall framework of ethnic politics. In this context, although the complexity of decision-making increased, the process

almost completely excluded the key political questions related to the role and purpose of education, replacing them with operational concerns or the expression of specific identities. The second axis concerns the shift from class-based towards identity-based policies. While education policies in socialist Yugoslavia focused on the role of education in preventing (or reversing) the reproduction of class inequalities, the class discourse first became obscured by the discourse of nationalism and, then, by the plural discourses of ethnicity, religion, and culture. In this process, class-based concerns evaporated almost completely; they were replaced by fixed identitarian categories that came to dominate the public sphere in many of the societies of former Yugoslavia.

The combined and parallel processes of depoliticizing education policymaking and of the shift in focus towards primarily identity-based concerns have important implications. Education policies that focus on class tend to emphasize the role of education in reproducing social and power inequalities, or, in simpler terms, in preventing people from accessing different aspects of life. These perspectives recognize that education can act as a repressive force and thus focus on struggles, conflicts, and tensions over the making, definition, and ownership of education policy claims. Despite the fact that their interpretations can lead to ideological rigidity, as we could witness in the case of socialist Yugoslavia, this is not necessarily a pessimistic view of education, but rather—or at least as much—a transformative one. It focuses on the possibility of education policies to enable individuals or groups to transcend socially constructed limits and boundaries. In this context, education is constructed as a fundamentally critical practice—it seeks to question the social order, rather than to create (or recreate) it.

Approaches to education that are based on identities, however, ascribe a much more conservative role to education: it focuses on *enabling* individuals to discover or exercise their “true” identity and their “true” culture. Education policies are framed in relation to belonging to a (usually primordial) group. In this sense, the role of education exhausts itself in helping people realize their (presumably, inborn, and certainly, “traditional”) identity. Although this can also constitute a liberating practice, in the sense of opening venues for socialization and places of belonging, more commonly it does not seek to challenge social structures or practices, at least not those that do not impinge on the boundaries of one’s own identity group. Emancipation, if it takes place,

has to happen *within* these boundaries; the transcendence and the development of solidarity with people from different groups is not a “natural” goal or outcome of education policies. As Safstrom argues, “schooling is about occupying a position corresponding to one’s place in the social order (...) [e]mancipation, which I understand to be central for any conception of ‘education,’ always happens in the interplay between ‘the order of truth’ and the disturbance of that order. That is, emancipation is a break with schooling” (2011, 200). Thus, emancipation can happen only in educational contexts that seek to *break away from* and transcend inherited structures: all other forms of education constitute “schooling,” or, in other words, reproduction.

The lesson to be learned from the transformation of education policies in the former Yugoslavia is, thus, at once powerful and simple. Given the role of education in creating (and recreating) social identities, it makes sense to assume that education policies will have pronounced and long-lasting consequences on social structures and dynamics. Education policies that are depoliticized, reduced to technical solutions or examples of “best practice,” or politicized only in the narrow framework of ethnic politics, limit the possibility of individuals to creatively engage in their creation, discussion, and transformation. Such policies emphasize the discourse of rights, but frequently at the expense of possibilities. Most importantly, they tend to obscure the debate on what education should be about, transferring it to the level of pre-defined political consensus. In this way, they both depoliticize the realm of education policymaking, rendering it less democratic, and disempower those who frequently have the highest stakes in the education process—the marginalized, the “forgotten,” and all those who do not belong to the elites in a fragmented public sphere.

This book, however, does not wish to argue that all identity-based policies will necessary end up doing this, nor that the process is singular or irreversible. The periods analyzed here all constituted “critical junctions”: moments in which different choices were possible. These policies were thus an outcome of specific actions by specific actors who were perhaps not always aware of all the possible consequences. It is through the understanding of these processes of decision-making, and through the analysis of their different outcomes, that we come to “repoliticize” and reclaim the process of policymaking. Through the reconstruction of these processes before, during, and after the breakup of former Yugo-

slavia, and the discussion of their implications, this book hopes to have contributed a small step toward the realization of this goal.

5.4. Beyond Yugoslavia: What Is To Be Done?

The realization of the potential of education to contribute to both reproduction of the existing social order and to its transformation should not translate into a naïve belief in the power of education along the lines of “romantic possibilitarian rhetoric,” in which “the language of possibility substitutes for a consistent tactical analysis of what the balance of forces actually is and what is necessary to change it” (2001, 63–64). The final part of this book, thus, will offer a brief—and necessarily general—consideration of what can be done with education policies “after Yugoslavia.”

Together with other critical theorists, Adorno considered that the totalizing, violent potential of education did not emanate from the practice itself, but rather from the tendency of education to reflect and reproduce the prevailing ethos of society. Totalitarian societies, thus, will tend to create totalitarian education systems, which, in turn, will produce obedient and totalitarian individuals: “[t]he pressure exerted by the prevailing universal upon everything particular, upon the individual people and the individual institutions, has a tendency to destroy the particular and the individual together with their power of resistance” (Adorno 1969, 2). This can be taken to mean that a profound education reform is impossible without a preceding overarching societal transformation—in other words, a revolution.

While it is certainly not possible to decouple education from the broader societal forces, however, education is one of the rare social practices that do have a considerable degree of autonomy. This means that it can be used as the venue for challenging dominant social categories and, thus, can generate a critical “mass” or at least critical voices capable of raising questions about the state of the world—from the broadest concerns, such as environmental or gender or race issues, to localized problems in which these, but also context-specific dynamics, tend to be reflected. This means that education can actually serve as a consistently progressive social force. However, in order to perform this function, education has to cease being the instrument for the

reproduction of existing (or creation of novel) forms of social privilege. In order to be truly transformative, education has to be capable of critically assessing all social practices—including itself.

Education policy after Yugoslavia, then, calls for two things. One, following Adorno, can be termed critical self-reflection. It is important to note that critical self-reflection is not a matter of, and cannot be reduced to, a slot or even an entire subject in the curriculum, be it called civic education, critical thinking, or something else (nor, for that matter, constrained to the classroom). Critical self-reflection needs to become the ethos and method of education. As method, it would entail the critical examination of the dominant assumptions transmitted both through, and outside of, the education system. In other words, education policy aimed at fostering critical self-reflection would encourage the idea of education as a sort of “protected” space, where teachers and students could challenge and probe established social narratives. This doesn’t mean, however, that education should develop as a “bubble” or, worse, as a practice of “navel-gazing.” Critical self-reflection is pointless unless it seeks to actively engage with society.

In the context of former Yugoslavia, this critical engagement would, first and foremost, have to entail a critical examination of the ideas and practices of identity and belonging, including those that have come to the forefront in the aftermath of the conflict. Rather than a glossed-over version of “repressive tolerance,” this would mean developing a critical stance toward one’s own concepts of group belonging, as well as toward the concepts of identity and belonging of others. This critical stance, however, need not be disrespectful: the emphasis is on understanding the historical, social, and political processes through which groups and collective identities are constituted and performed, rather than on evaluating them as “better” or “worse,” “older” or “more recent.” This method of practicing critical self-reflection could also, hopefully, open the door to a profound examination of the legacy of the past—the most recent, as well as the more distant one. Dealing with the past, in this sense, would not entail only the search for justice, catharsis or absolution through legal, religious, or political means, but rather an open examination of the shared responsibility for, first, understanding the causal mechanisms that led to the bloody culmination of the Yugoslav crisis, and second, for ensuring that a similar tragedy—the post-Yugoslav equivalent of Auschwitz—never happens again.

This task, inevitably, would also require the critical examination of the process through which it is performed—education itself. This is what the critical self-reflection as an *ethos* (and ethics) of education means. It entails the possibility to challenge the very idea and assumptions of the education process, and to question both the institutions and discourses that support it. It would call for a profound de-hierarchization of education, and not only in the sense of subverting the dominant hierarchical mode of teacher–student relationships. First and foremost, it would challenge the right of elites—regardless of whether they hail from party bureaucracies, the “educated” bourgeoisie, or “experts” and managers employed by international organizations—to define the content and course of education policies. In other words, it would strive to re-democratize education, to bring the “political” back in, not in the sense of narrowly-defined interests, but rather in the sense of making education policies a matter of public concern—and, indeed, involving the public beyond the aseptic and disempowered notion of “stakeholders.”

Secondly, it would seek to divorce education from its historical role in the reproduction of both social inequalities and the *status quo*. Non-hierarchical education has to be open to different and heterodoxical interpretations of reality, not just those advocated by politically powerful groups or actors. Equally, truly egalitarian education cannot function as a source of social distinction. This, of course, does not mean that education across the world should be homogenized and differences between institutions, pedagogies, approaches, or disciplines erased. But, as long as these differences translate more or less neatly into sources of social inequalities, education will continue to serve the existing order.

These ideas and changes may appear as too idealistic. But they don’t need to happen immediately. The experience of former Yugoslavia has shown us that ambitious and overarching education reforms more frequently serve to maintain the status quo, rather than to change it. Change, for this reason, need not happen overnight. It can be slow and incremental, taking place in small steps and acts. These ideas have been elaborated in the work of critical theorists and critical pedagogues, such as Apple, Adorno, Benjamin, Bourdieu, Ferrer, Freire, McLaren, Nussbaum, and Rancière, to name but a few. The theory is out there. But, as the history of education reform in former Yugoslavia teaches us, change requires political action.

This brings us to the second thing education policy “after Yugoslavia” calls for. This is an ingredient we can, together with Cho (2009) and Marcuse (1966), dub the “utopian imagination.” The striking thing about education policies in former Yugoslavia is exactly their lack of imagination. Rather than transcending the constraints of the historical moment, the policies analyzed in this book, for the most part, sought to maintain the status quo. Even when they were framed in utopian rhetorics, the utopias they hoped for were limited to specific group (or groups) of people, while being decidedly anti-utopian for others. This is where critical self-reflection is crucial: realizing the limits and constraints of one’s own and others’ existence can help us understand the interrelatedness of utopian projects, and extend the imagination beyond one’s own, and into the world of others. This is why “utopian imagination” is not ignorance or obstinate refusal to face “reality”; it is the very opposite of it, in the sense in which it entails the realization that there are, in a manner of speaking, multiple realities all converging in the same time and place. Utopian imagination, thus, teaches empathy, not as an abstract quality, but as a concentrated endeavor to reach out to and understand other people. Rather than dividing cities, land, worldviews, or schools into “mine” and “yours,” “ours” and “theirs,” utopian imagination can help education provide the necessary step in the realization that these boundaries, after all, separate the same human beings.

Education policies that would aim to incorporate these principles could work to both overcome the legacy of the recent violent past in former Yugoslavia, and to address the deeper structural causes of conflicts—in Yugoslavia and elsewhere. In this process, education would not ignore the societal tensions and cleavages, but rather seek to understand their origins, mechanisms of reproduction, and ways to transcend them. Rather than aiming to establish social privilege—irrespective of whether it is based on class, status, ethnicity, race, gender or any other category of identity or belonging—education could work to challenge the social forces that classify and limit the possibilities of individuals on the basis of arbitrary categories. In this sense, education could truly become the practice of freedom.

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Index

5 October 2000, 81, 82

A

accreditation, 150, 166, 203

Adorno, Theodor, 195, 211, 212, 213

Auschwitz, 195, 212

B

Bayerl, Alexandar, 151

Berlin Wall, 108

Bildungsbürgertum, 109, 116, 122, 123

Bologna Process, 13, 90, 126, 127, 131, 148

Bosnia (and Herzegovina), 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 49, 69, 70, 76–77, 80, 85, 86, 87, 96–97, 126, 128, 129, 130, 132, 133, 155, 156, 157, 158, 198, 200

bourgeoisie, 47, 49, 106, 107, 108, 118, 120, 121, 122, 213

Broz, Josip (Tito), 2, 4, 30, 47, 50, 51–2, 53, 56, 6–4, 65, 73, 77, 160, 205

Budiša, Dražen, 61

C

Catholic Church, 92, 96, 112

civic education, 25, 77, 89, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 99, 100, 102, 105, 106, 110, 111, 115–23, 159, 200, 206, 212

class, 2, 21, 23, 25, 31, 32, 36, 40, 52, 54, 61, 62, 70, 73, 74, 76, 84, 90, 107, 109, 116, 117, 119, 121, 122, 123, 124, 193, 194, 197, 199, 200, 204, 206, 206–9, 214

Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA), 166

Communism, 13, 14, 15, 15, 21, 25, 29, 30, 37, 73, 82, 107, 115, 123, 205

conservatism, 109

conservative, 31, 77, 87, 90, 97–99, 105, 106, 163, 209

consociational, 70, 85, 130, 185, 188, 192

Consociationalism, 70

Constitution of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (1974), 28, 68–69, 70–71, 75, 121, 138, 156

Council of Europe, 125, 126, 173, 185, 199

Croatia, 5, 32, 41, 56, 59–69, 77, 80, 86, 96, 97, 125–26, 183, 198–99

“Croatian Spring”, 32, 45, 48, 59–60, 62–65, 67, 96

Čičak, Ivan Zvonimir, 60

D

Dabčević-Kučar, Slavka, 59, 64
 Dačić, Ivica, 144
 Daxner, Michael, 147
 Dayton, Peace Agreement, 80, 85, 158
 dealing with the past, 22, 82, 87, 114, 120, 212
 decentralization, 37, 59, 68, 71, 90, 161, 177
 democracy, 13, 66, 70, 89, 90, 119, 130, 148
 democratization, 47, 48, 59, 69, 80, 103, 125
 Đinđić, Zoran, 81, 88, 92, 99, 102, 111, 130, 150, 158, 159, 161, 162, 165, 190, 200

E

elites, 3, 4, 14, 49, 57–58, 74, 76, 106, 110, 112, 122, 132, 188–89, 194, 208, 210, 213
 employment, 34, 35, 43–4, 47, 67, 72, 74, 76, 79, 133, 134, 138, 139, 178, 185, 205
 ethnic bargaining, 25, 169, 188
 ethnic mobilization, 25, 79, 128, 145, 157, 169, 171, 189, 197
 Europe, 3, 13, 15, 51, 81, 148
 European Union (EU), 13, 16, 82, 109–10, 125, 127, 164, 178, 188, 199, 201
 European University Association (EUA), 126, 147, 180
 Europeanization, 12–17, 127, 131, 151, 188, 200

F

Filipović, Muhamed, 160
 fragmentation, 2, 77, 79, 128, 188, 193
 Frankfurt School, 53

G

gender, 101, 211, 214
 Gligorov, Kiro, 168
 Golubović, Zagorka, 54
 governance, 14, 23, 37, 44, 126–27, 133, 147, 149, 151, 154, 175, 197–98, 202, post-liberal, 19, 126, 132, 202, 204
 Gramsci, Antonio, 74, 132, 188

H

higher education, 9, 22, 25, 28, 35, 40, 42, 49, 51, 55, 57, 61, 72–73, 86, 90, 107, 124, 125–33, 135–37, 139, 141–61, 163–167, 169–79, 181–93, 202, 205, 207

I

Indić, Trivo, 54–55
 integration, 13–15, 17, 19, 28, 35, 38, 42–44, 57–58, 68, 73, 76, 84, 89, 90, 116, 125, 127–28, 130, 137, 139, 144, 147, 151–53, 155, 161, 164, 166–67, 170–71, 173–74, 176, 180, 181, 183, 186–87, 189, 200–2, 207
 intellectuals, 46, 52, 53, 57–58, 60, 65, 73–74, 77, 99, 107–10, 121, 123, 137, 160, 171
 International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY), 87–88, 92, 95, 97, 109–11, 114, 120
 International Crisis Group (ICG), 82, 87, 132, 155–56
 International Monetary Fund (IMF), 82, 125
 International University of Novi Pazar (IUNP), 160–61, 163–67, 190
 Islamic Community (IC), 160
 Izetbegović, Alija, 157

J

Jovanović, Čedomir, 111, 120, 161–62

K

Knežević, Gašo, 89, 161
 Korčula summer school, 53
 Kosovo, 12, 22, 25, 28, 45, 56–59, 62, 65, 69, 80, 85, 86–88, 96–97, 110, 125–26, 129, 130, 132, 136–56, 160, 168–72, 175–77, 181, 183–85, 189–92, 198–99, 203
 Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), 2
 Koštunica, Vojislav, 81, 112, 165
 Kovač Cerović, Tunde, 89

L

labor market, 29, 34–36, 38–39, 42, 44, 72, 138, 199
 League of Communists of Croatia (LCC), 32, 59–61, 63–64
 League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), 28, 30–31, 33, 36–37, 50, 55, 60, 63–65, 67, 73, 77, 80
 Ljajić, Rasim, 157–59, 165–67

M

Macedonia, Former Yugoslav Republic of, 4, 5, 8, 12, 22, 25, 57, 59, 65–66, 69, 25–26, 129–32, 134, 136, 156, 168–92, 202–203
 Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences (MANU), 176–7
 MASPOK, *see* “Croatian Spring”
 Majić, Vigor, 89, 93
 Marxism, 4, 20, 37, 40, 53, 67–8, 72, 75, 199, 205
 Mihajlović, Dušan, 91
 Milošević, Slobodan, 21, 25, 68, 75, 79–89, 92, 95, 97, 105–2, 12–13, 141–43, 145, 158–63, 189–201, 203
 minorities, 8, 10, 69–70, 77, 93, 96, 124, 130–31, 134, 141, 147, 149, 153, 159, 164, 171, 174–75, 183–85, 190–93
 modernity, 18, 107, 109, 162

Montenegro, 59, 85, 100–101, 126, 155, 158

N

nation, 23, 50, 62, 67, 69, 79–80, 83, 94, 99, 105, 108, 126, 136, 156, 169, 185, 190–91, 205
 National Liberation Army (NLA), 178
 nationalism, 5, 16, 37, 58, 65–66, 68–69, 72, 82, 96, 109–11, 114, 119, 121, 139, 149, 172, 178, 205–206, 209
 NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), 80–81, 86, 88, 129, 144–45, 149, 175, 177, 189–90
 nationalist mobilization, 5, 45, 68, 79, 96, 183

O

Obradović, Žarko, 152
 Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA), 130, 177–78, 180–82, 185–86, 192
 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 82, 89
 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), 125, 132, 184, 191, 202
 OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (OSCE HCNM), 130, 175, 191–92
 “Other Serbia”, *see* “Second Serbia”

P

Party of Democratic Action (SDA), 157
 Papović, Radivoje, 142–44, 150–52
 Pavle, Patriarch, 94, 113
 peacebuilding, 168, 180, 189, 202
 Pirker, Pero, 59, 64
 policy
 analysis, 20, 23
 borrowing, 199
 transfer, 176
 praxis, 52–56, 62, 66–68, 71, 73

Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG), 147, 150, 152
 Polozhani, Aziz, 181
 Popov, Nebojša, 54–55
 post-conflict, 23, 25, 124–25, 127, 129, 131–33, 135–37, 185, 188–89, 197–98, 201–202, 207
 power-sharing, 5, 150, 185–87, 192
 privatization, 13, 86

R

race, 211, 214
 Ranković, Aleksandar, 56, 73
 regime change, 22, 77, 81–82, 84–88, 119, 122, 146, 155, 158, 189–90, 206
 religion, 82, 84, 91–92, 94–96, 98, 100–101, 103–104, 110–12, 114, 119, 209
 religious education, 79, 81, 83–87, 89, 91–95, 97–107, 109–11, 113–17, 119–20, 159, 162, 198, 200–201
 Republika Srpska, 5, 130, 158
 Resolutions of the 10th Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, 28, 31–34, 36
 Roma, 124, 190, 193, 206–7
 Rugova, Ibrahim, 142–43, 145, 203

S

Samoupravljanje, *see* self-management
 Sandžak, 22, 25, 125, 130–34, 136, 155–67, 190–91, 202, 207
 Savić, Gojko, 146, 150–51
 “Second Serbia,” 107–110, 112
 Second World War, *see* World War II
 secondary education, 27–29, 35–36, 38–39, 41, 43–44, 73, 122, 126, 170–71, 173
 segregation, 10, 143, 155, 203
 self-management, 20, 28–31, 33, 35, 53–54, 200
 Serbia, 12, 22, 25, 28, 48, 56–57, 59, 65–66, 69, 75–77, 79–86, 88–91,

96–98, 100, 103–12, 114–24, 126, 128–31, 140–44, 146–47, 149, 151–68, 183–84, 189–201, 203, 206, 208
 Serbian Orthodox Church, 83, 91–92, 94–99, 110–11, 113–14, 120, 201
 Slovenia, 5, 46, 66, 69, 75–76, 85, 101, 125–26, 198–99
 social inequalities, 2, 4, 9, 36–7, 47, 49, 73–4, 121, 193–4, 208, 213
 Socialism, 3, 7, 21, 25, 30–31, 33–34, 37, 51, 53–54, 61–62, 121–22, 198, 204
 South-East European University (SEEU), 175–77, 179–83, 186–87, 192
 Soviet Union, 30
 State University of Novi Pazar (SUNP), 130, 163–67, 191
 State University of Tetovo (SUT), 130, 180–83, 186–87, 192
 Stojanović, Svetozar, 53–54
 student protests, 5, 25, 50, 52, 71, 81, 205
 in 1968, 25, 50, 52, 71, 205
 in 1991–92, 81
 in 1996–97, 81
 Suljagić, Emir, 85, 200
 Šćecibović, Refik, 89
 Šešelj, Vojislav, 144
 Šuvar, Stipe, 32, 38–41, 74, 199

T

Tači, Hashim, 142
 Tito, *see* Josip Broz
 The Hague Tribunal, *see* ICTY
 tradition, 105, 111, 117, 194
 traditional, 42, 56, 83, 92, 94–95, 97, 102–103, 122, 209
 transition, 13, 15, 17, 21, 25, 38, 42–43, 66–67, 74, 79, 82, 84, 86–88, 97–98, 100, 108–109, 115, 118–119, 121, 125, 148, 153, 168, 185, 187, 192, 197–98, 202
 Tripalo, Mika, 59, 64
 Tuđman, Franjo, 5, 65
 Turajlić, Srbijanka, 89, 93

U

- Ugljanin, Sulejman, 157–59, 163, 165–67
- unemployment, 4, 34, 38, 40, 42–44, 49, 67, 72, 76, 87, 140, 205
- United Nations (UN), 3, 125, 149, 168, 189, 199
- United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), 146–47, 149–50, 155
- University of Belgrade, 45, 48, 59, 54–55, 57–58, 73, 75, 89, 95, 112, 163
- University of East Sarajevo, 128, 133
- University of Ljubljana, 48
- University of Mostar, 8, 128–29, 133
“Džemal Bijedić,” 128
Sveučilište u Mostaru, 128
- University of Prishtina (UP), 8, 45, 56, 58, 129, 137–55, 170, 189, 191
in Kosovska Mitrovica (UPKM), 129, 146–47, 150–55, 190, 203
- University of Prizren, 153
- University of Sarajevo, 49, 128
- University of Tetovo, 129–30, 130, 171–74, 177, 180–81, 184–86, 191–92, 202–203
- University of Zagreb, 48, 60–61, 63–64, 139
- Usm(j)ereno obrazovanje*, *see* vocation-oriented education
- Usmerjeno izobraževanje*, *see* vocation-oriented education

V

- values, 7, 11, 14, 16, 18, 22, 73, 79, 89–90, 93, 100, 103, 109–10, 114, 116–23, 134, 148, 160, 206
- Van der Stoel, Max (*see also* OSCE HCNM), 130
- vocation-oriented education (VOE), 29, 31–32, 40, 42–45, 67–8, 71, 77, 86, 121–23, 173, 198–200, 205
- Vojvodina, Autonomous Province of, 28, 32, 41, 57, 141, 160

W

- Western Balkans, 13–4, 16–17, 19–20, 26, 127, 136, 161
- World Bank, 82, 89, 125
- World War II (WWII), 3–5, 7, 27, 45, 53, 56, 59, 73, 91, 96, 107, 111, 114–15, 118, 120, 156, 168, 195–96

Y

- Yugoslavia, Federal Republic of, 100
- Yugoslavia, Socialist Federative Republic of, 3, 27, 31, 34, 45, 59, 63, 70–71, 74, 79, 118, 128, 154, 157, 189, 196–97, 199, 204, 205, 209

Z

- Zukorlić, Muamer (Mufti), 130, 159–60, 163, 165–67, 190–91

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From Class to Identity offers an analysis of education-policy-making in the processes of social transformation and post-conflict development in the countries of former Yugoslavia. Based on a number of in-depth case studies, from the decades leading to the country's violent breakup in the 1990s to contemporary post-conflict reconstruction, it tells the story of the political processes and struggles underlying specific education reforms. The book moves away from technical-rational or prescriptive approaches that dominate the literature on education policy-making during periods of social change, and offers an example of how social, political, and cultural context interacts with education reforms. It shows how policies developed in specific historical periods relate to the broader questions such as: What is the role of education in society? What kind of education is needed for a “good” society? What kind of political subjectivities (individuals, citizens, ethnic or social groups, nations) are created or operationalized through them? Bacevic shows how different answers to these questions influence the contents and outcomes of policies.

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